GETTING OUT THE VOTE

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GETTING OUT THE VOTE

An Experiment in the Stimulation of Voting

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An Experiment in the Stimulation of Voting

BY

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PREFACE

The purpose of the present book is to describe an attempt that was made in the years 1924 and 1925 to measure the effect of a non-partisan mail canvass to get out the vote of the citizens living in selected districts in the city of Chicago. It is called an experiment in the stimulation of voting because every effort was made to be as scientific and objective as possible. The project is a continuation of the study of non-voting begun in Chicago in connection with the mayoralty election of 1923. The basis of the non-voting study was a collection of six thousand personal interviews. The reasons for not voting given by the persons interviewed were classified and tabulated so as to bring out the relation between typical reasons and the situations resulting in non-voting. The present experiment is based upon the observation of the actual behavior of the same number of citizens at two elections, one national and the other local. It is hoped that those who are concerned with the struggle for honest and representative elections, with the details of party organization, with the problem of the foreign vote, with the task of political education, or with methods in political science will find the present work of interest.

Professor Charles Edward Merriam and I have published the results of the study of non-voting under the title, *Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control.* Professor Merriam foreshadowed the present study, and it was due to his inspiration and guidance that work on it was undertaken and carried through. I also wish to express my appreciation to Dr. Rodney L. Mott who took charge of the field work for several weeks and who was closely associated with the study throughout.

As in the study of the causes of non-voting, the assistance of a corps of competent field workers, statisticians, computing and general clerical workers was necessary for the present experiment. Grateful acknowledgement is made to the Local Community Research Committee of the University of Chicago for making this assistance available. To Miss Susan Elrick, Miss Pearl Robertson, Mr. Norman Wood Beck, and Mr. Walter Laves, Local Community Research assistants, and to others connected with the experiment, I wish to extend my profound gratitude. Their co-operation made the present report possible.

Again I wish to thank the following public officers for their continued courtesies and assistance: the Hon. Edmund K. Jarecki, county judge of Cook County; the Hon. Martin J. O'Brien, city control-

ler; Messrs. Anthony Czarnecki, Harry A. Lipsky, and Fred V. Maguire, members of the Board of Election Commissioners; Mr. John S. Rusch, chief clerk of the Board of Election Commissioners; and Mr. Louis A. Revor, of the Statistical Division of the Controller's Office. To the various members of the Local Community Research Committee who looked over the manuscript I am also greatly indebted.

HAROLD F. GOSNELL

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
July, 1925

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1924 there were more Get Out the Vote clubs organized than in any recent presidential election campaign. Shocked by figures which show the declining interest in politics manifested by the American electorate since 1896, party managers, editors, business men, leaders of women's clubs, and secretaries of civic organizations all over the United States united in a drive to increase the proportion of the eligible voters that took part in the presidential election.[1] From the national headquarters of the two major parties, minute instructions went to all the local managers urging them to exert their best efforts in getting out the vote. An energetic lawyer established a National Get-Out-the-Vote Club, with headquarters in Washington and branches in the various states.[2] The National League of Women Voters arranged for house-to-house canvasses and enlisted the services of a volunteer motor corps. The American Bankers' Associa-

[1] A. M. Schlesinger and E. M. Eriksson, "The Vanishing Voter," *New Republic*, XL, 162–67.

[2] S. Michelet, "Millions of Americans Who Fail to Vote," *Current History Magazine*, XXI, 247–49.

tion, the United States Chamber of Commerce, and the National Association of Manufacturers organized their membership for the purpose of registering a full business men's vote. Over two million Boy Scouts took part in the campaign of reminding citizens of their privileges and duties as voters. The pulpit, the daily press, the trade journal, the radio, the theater, and the lecture platform were all used as advertising media for the election. What was the net effect of all this publicity regarding the election? Did a higher proportion of the eligible voters take part in the electoral process?

The only candid answer to these questions is that we do not know whether the publicity regarding the electoral process as such actually resulted in the participation of a larger number of eligible voters than usual. There is no way by which the influence of the get-out-the-vote campaign throughout the country at large can now be measured. It is true that in some states a larger proportion of the adult citizens voted in 1924 than in 1920, but what part of this increase, if any, can be traced to a single factor like the get-out-the-vote movement? The party managers urged those citizens to vote whom they thought would vote right. In close states and in close election districts the party managers always do this. In fact, it might be stated as a general

rule in American politics that the proportion of eligible voters that come to the polls varies directly with the closeness of the election in the particular jurisdiction analyzed.[1] It is not essential that the election actually be a close one. If the general impression is current that the election is going to be a close one, that is sufficient to stimulate greatly the interest of the electors in the voting process. Although the Coolidge election was a landslide, the outcome of many state contests was doubtful in October, and it was the citizens of those states who by and large showed the most efficient voting record in November. Who can say, then, whether or not the non-partisan get-out-the-vote campaign was successful?

Granting that the question as to the effectiveness of the get-out-the-vote campaign might be answered, the question still remains as to the significance of such a movement. There were many publicists in the fall of 1924 who voiced feelings of alarm at the increasing size of the "slacker vote." The

[1] See my article, "The Voter Resigns," *New Republic*, October 21, 1925. Mr. E. M. Eriksson, in a letter to the editor of the same journal, appearing December 2, 1925, took issue with me on this point. His misinterpretation of my article was due in part to my failure to give the full statistical basis for my conclusions. The original manuscript contained the following footnote: "The per cent of the vote cast for the majority party and the per cent of the eligible voters not voting by states correlated .62 in 1920 and .58 in 1924."

Homiletic Review said that the apathy of the voters constituted one of the greatest menaces to an intelligently governed democracy; the *Dallas Journal* gave expression to the view that it is the non-voting citizen who is chiefly responsible for the sort of government and the type of public servant that we have; the *Philadelphia Inquirer* printed an editorial to the effect that the size of the non-voting-citizen population was a national disgrace; the *Review of Reviews* said that our voting record revealed a lack of interest, not to mention an entire absence of that constant vigilance which is the price of liberty, that may well impair the efficacy of American institutions; and other journals voiced similar sentiments.[1] On the other hand, there were newspapers and magazines which minimized the importance of the get-out-the-vote movement. Those determining the policy of *Current Opinion* took direct issue with the *Homiletic Review* and came out with the following statement: "The fact that a man does not care enough about politics to vote indicates that he is probably not equipped to choose wisely among the issues and candidates." Which one of these magazines was right? Again, the candid observer must answer that no one knows whether the non-voters

[1] "A New 'Get Out the Vote Movement,'" *Literary Digest*, LXXXII (August 23, 1924).

at the last few elections were more or less intelligent on political matters than the voters. Nor can it be said that anyone has established the existence of a direct relationship between non-voting and the efficacy of our political institutions.

The present study is an attempt on a small scale to give a scientific answer to some of the questions raised above. Fairly definite conclusions are set forth below regarding the effect of a non-partisan mail canvass to get out the vote of some three thousand selected adult citizens in Chicago in two important elections, one national and the other local. There have been other non-partisan attempts to stimulate voting in which a rough measure of the results was provided, the most notable of which is the sustained effort of the Americanization Society of Grand Rapids, Michigan, to impress citizens with the importance of voting.[1] Since 1918, election day has been tag day in Grand Rapids. School children and representatives of women's clubs have been at the polls to tag all voters as soon as they have performed the task of voting. That the results of this experiment are in a general way susceptible to statistical analysis cannot be doubted. The chief claim made for the present experiment in the stimulation

[1] J. P. Gavit, *Americans by Choice* (New York, 1922), pp. 330–34, 365–69.

of voting is that the measurement of the results has been more exact.

No attempt is made in the pages that follow to give a definite answer to the question regarding the significance of the non-partisan get-out-the-vote movement. The facts gathered in the study of non-voting show that a large proportion of the non-voters in Chicago are ignorant regarding elections.[1] The present study also shows that there is a relationship between habitual non-voting and a lack of schooling. The fact that many of the uneducated women disfranchise themselves by their indifference might lead some people to the conclusion that none of the uneducated should be allowed to vote. However, the problem under discussion is not the determination of the qualifications for voting, but rather the use made of the franchise by those who have it. Alarmists who claim that those who fail to vote in a national election are largely from the intelligent classes are, of course, mistaken. On the other hand, there is a measure of truth in what the vote stimulators say about local elections and primaries.[2] Fur-

[1] C. E. Merriam and H. F. Gosnell, *Non-Voting: Causes and Methods of Control.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1924.

[2] F. Kent, *The Great Game of Politics* (New York, 1924), pp. 33–40; "The Direct Primary," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* March, 1923.

thermore, the most enthusiastic supporters of the get-out-the-vote movement do not view an election as an entirely rational process. They look upon it as an emotional experience. Voting is the sacred ritual of democracy by means of which authority relationships are established in a great amorphous mass of human beings. Anything that tends to destroy the sacredness of the ritual is regarded by them as subversive of the existing order. In their eyes, the presence of a large and possibly increasing body of non-voters in this country tends to weaken the general confidence in the efficacy of political methods. Disgust with politics is not the most frequent reason for not voting that is encountered in interviewing non-voters, but it is nevertheless an important reason.[1] If the existing order of political arrangements is to be continued then something can be said for urging those who have the franchise to use it, even if some of them do not understand much about elections at present. Voting is itself an educational process. If certain ignorant persons are given the right to vote, then one of the functions of the government is to educate those persons up to the intelligent use of that right. Until the existing qualifications for voting and the voting process itself are changed, this will remain a problem before

[1] Merriam and Gosnell, *op. cit.*, pp. 123 ff.

the various governmental organizations within the United States.

Inasmuch as no substitute for the present electoral arrangements is set forth in the following pages, the efficacy of the process is taken for granted. In fact, certain suggestions are made as to how to stimulate interest in voting upon an extensive scale. These suggestions have particular reference to conditions in the state of Illinois, but the Illinois election system so closely resembles that of other states that the suggestions should be of general significance. There is no doubt that persons interested in electoral reforms would like to see some or all of the administrative changes outlined tried out in different jurisdictions. Experimentation with electoral devices will not automatically produce efficient and responsive government and cure the ills of democracy, but it may help to make the voting process a more intelligent one.

The experiment in the stimulation of voting is an attempt to apply some of the conclusions reached in the survey of non-voting which was conducted in connection with the Chicago mayoralty election of 1923. Some reviewers of the non-voting book have criticized the fact that a local election was used for observation.[1] As was pointed out in the book, it did

[1] A. N. Holcombe, "Book Reviews," *American Political Science Review*, XIX, 202–3.

not make much difference what election was chosen if the proper classification of the non-voters was made. Some of the non-voters interviewed had

TABLE I

REASONS FOR NOT REGISTERING GIVEN BY SELECTED NON-VOTERS IN THE 1923 AND 1924 ELECTIONS: PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION

Reasons for Not Registering	Adult Citizens Not Registered for the Mayoralty Election of 1923	Adult Citizens Not Registered for the Presidential Election of 1924
All reasons:		
Number	3,369	649
Percentage	100.0	100.0
Illness	7.7	12.3
Absence	6.2	4.2
Detained by helpless member of family	1.6	1.1
Insufficient legal residence	7.6	6.6
Fear of loss of wages or business	2.9	3.3
Congestion at the polls	0.5	0.5
Poor location of polling booth	0.7	1.1
Fear of disclosure of age	0.3	0.0
Disbelief in woman's voting	11.3	13.4
Objections of husband	1.6	1.8
Belief that one vote counts for nothing	1.6	2.2
Disgust with politics	4.9	6.0
Disgust with own party	0.6	0.0
Belief that ballot box is corrupted	0.7	0.0
Disbelief in all political action	0.5	0.0
General indifference	33.4	33.8
Indifference to particular election	2.3	0.3
Neglect: intended to register but failed	5.0	2.9
Ignorance or timidity regarding elections	9.6	10.0
Failure of party workers	1.0	0.5

never voted in any election. A recheck upon the frequency distribution of non-voters classified by the reasons given for not voting was made in connection with the presidential election, and the re-

sults are compared with those obtained in the non-voting survey in Table I.

It appears from this table that the conclusions reached in the study of non-voting regarding the quantitative importance of the various reasons given for electoral abstentions were fairly accurate. The attitudes of most of the non-voters interviewed in connection with the presidential election were obtained both before and after the election. In both the presidential and the mayoralty elections, one-third of those who failed to register attributed their delinquency in electoral matters to general indifference, one-tenth were ignorant or timid regarding elections, and so on. Although this table shows what kind of rationalizations non-voters make for failing to exercise the franchise, it does not indicate the qualitative importance of the different reasons. How much pressure is needed to persuade a non-voter to overcome his indifference toward elections or his timidity regarding the process? It is this question which is given special consideration in the pages that follow. The results of the experiment in the stimulation of voting are based upon the actual response of six thousand citizens whose behavior was observed on November 4, 1924, and on February 14, 1925. It is assumed that the behavior of these citizens at these two elections is typical

enough to be of general interest.[1] The tremendous amount of work involved in making the observations set forth below will have been justified if some small advance has been made in the application of more exact methods to the study of electoral problems.

[1] See Ben A. Arneson "Non-voting in a Typical Ohio Community," *American Political Science Review*, XIX, 816–25. His results are strikingly similar to those obtained in *Non-Voting* and in the present study.

CHAPTER II

EXPERIMENTAL TECHNIQUE

The experiment in the stimulation of voting aimed to determine the extent to which some of the factors causing non-voting could be controlled in a given election. In order to set up this experiment it was necessary to keep constant, within reasonable limits, all of the factors that enter into the electoral process except the particular stimuli which were being tested. The exact scientist never completely controls all the conditions affecting his experiments, so perfection on this score could hardly be expected from a social investigator. In the first place, it is not definitely known what all the factors are that vary directly with the proportion of eligible voters that vote.[1] Some of the facts that are related to the condition of non-voting were brought out in a previous study made of the Chicago mayoralty election of 1923.[2] In that study paired observations of voters and non-voters were made and the total stimu-

[1] European investigators have only touched upon certain phases of the problem. See R. Segot, *De l'abstention in matiere electorale: Principaux moyens d'y remedier* (Angers, 1906); E. Bock, *Wahlstatistik* (Halle-Salle, 1919); and *Statistik der Grossratswahlen vom 6/7 Mai 1911 in Kanton Basel-Stadt* (Basel, 1911).

[2] Merriam and Gosnell, *op. cit.*

lating situations that resulted in the non-voting of some six thousand individuals were analyzed. The factors shown to have some relation to non-voting were sex, the dramatic quality of the particular election, the convenience of the election system, mobility, foreign birth and foreign-language training, and the nature of the local party organization. There were twice as many female non-voters as there were male non-voters, and a comparison between selected groups of voters and non-voters showed that newness to the city, unfamiliarity with local surroundings, foreign-language habits, and derivative citizenship were all factors which kept people from the polls on election day. The relation between non-voting and the strength of the local party organization is an obvious one. Assuming that these variables were the important ones, the problem then was to devise some method for holding them constant while the effect of variations in one of them was being studied.

The method of random sampling was used to control the factors other than the one which was varied artificially by the investigator. Since the experimenter, not having control over the election machinery or the party organizations, could not hope to introduce variations in either of these factors, it was necessary to keep them constant, and

also such factors as sex, mobility, foreign-language habits, and derivative citizenship. The first step in the sampling process was a complete canvass of all the adult citizens in twelve selected districts in Chicago during the summer months preceding the presidential election of 1924. These districts were chosen on the basis of data from the census office and from a previous study of them which showed them to be typical of the different racial and economic communities of the city. In all but four cases they coincided with voting precincts.[1] Among them were included a "Gold Coast" precinct inhabited largely by wealthy native whites; two South Side precincts populated by native whites, one of which was in a depreciated residential area while the other was in a good residential neighborhood; one South Side district which was solidly Negro; two districts near the Stockyards, one populated by persons of Irish and the other by persons of Polish extraction; one South Chicago precinct, predominantly Polish; two North Side precincts, one largely German and the other Swedish; and three West Side precincts which were populated by Russian Jews, Czechs, and Italians, respectively. These districts were selected from all parts of the city, and an analysis of their popula-

[1] The census enumeration district, which was being used as a base, cut across the precinct lines in four districts.

tion on the basis of a special tabulation from the 1920 census schedules showed that they were fairly compact and homogeneous. As complete social data as possible was obtained regarding each of the six thousand citizens living in these districts immediately prior to the presidential election of 1924. Carefully trained interviewers were sent out to ascertain the sex, color, citizenship status, occupation, country of birth, age, marital condition, mother-tongue, length of residence at same address and in the city, political preferences, schooling, literacy, previous voting record, knowledge of government, and economic status of these individuals.

The canvass was one of the most crucial parts of the experiment. If it were not conducted in a thorough fashion then there was no way of telling whether or not a typical cross-section of the population of the city was obtained. If the interviewer followed the printed list of registered voters too closely, then a disproportionate number of regular voters would be interviewed. Such a mistake would give an entirely erroneous impression of the voting response of the citizens in the district. The omission of the names of a few non-voters might make a significant change in the proportion of adult citizens that registered. In order to guard against errors of this sort, great care was taken in checking

up on the work of the interviewers. The tabulations from the census material gave one clue as to the total number of adult citizens that might be accommodated by the dwellings in the district, and the results of the non-voting study showed something about the proportion of non-registered persons that one might expect to find in the different neighborhoods. The work of the interviewers was carefully edited every day and all deviations from the standards made the subject of a personal conference.[1] The difficulties involved in this part of the work greatly increased the respect of the writer for successful precinct committeemen. To make a house-to-house canvass of all the adult citizens in a given district is both an expensive and an irksome task. In parts of the city where strangers are treated with suspicion it is a dangerous task. Misunderstandings arising out of language difficulties are apt to cause trouble. It requires persons of tact, good physique, perseverence, amiability, linguistic ability, ingenuity, and intelligence, who have a sympathetic feeling toward the canvass which is being undertaken, to do this work successfully.[2] Such persons are not any too plentiful. The party leaders who try to reward

[1] See Appendix B for the schedule and instructions that were used.

[2] All of the interviewers were students at the University of Chicago with the exception of one Polish investigator. Students with appropriate language training were assigned to the different foreign-language communities.

triumphant heelers should not be too severely criticized. As long as the existing election system is continued in this country, the party workers who actually canvass their districts faithfully and keep in touch with the rapid changes that take place in a metropolitan constituency will be rewarded in one way or another.[1]

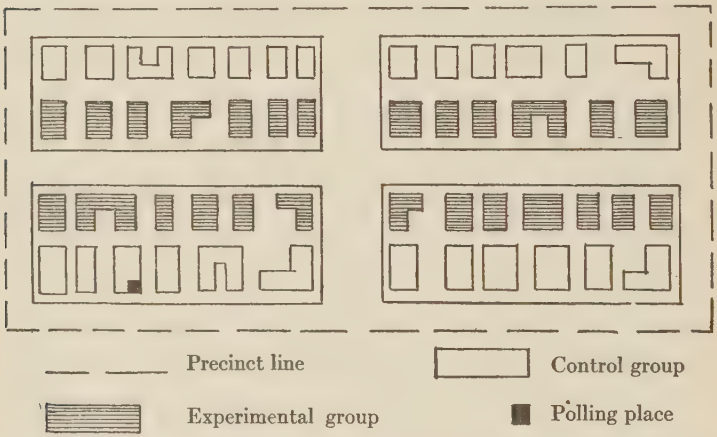
The second step in the process of sampling was the division of the citizens in each of the districts canvassed into two groups, one of which was to be experimented upon while the other was not. It was assumed that the non-experimental group could be used as a sort of control. In other words, if a larger proportion of the experimental group registered and voted than of the non-experimental, it was presumed that the stimuli had had some effect. In order to avoid possible contacts between the experimental and the control groups, the dividing lines between the two groups were as sharply drawn as possible. The way in which this was worked out in one district is shown by Chart I. There was no reason to suppose that the individuals in the experimental group selected in this way would differ greatly from those in the control group as far as

[1] It is the author's opinion that these functions should be highly professionalized as is the case in England where the professional election agents make a life-career out of election management or they should be regulated by law as in Belgium.

the relative number of men and women, the proportion of foreign-born, the amount of mobility, the proportion of uneducated, the type of the local election board, and the efficiency of the local party workers among them were concerned. After the

CHART I

MAP OF PRECINCT CONTAINING EXPERIMENTAL AND CONTROL GROUP



data was collected and tabulated,[1] it was possible to make an actual check on some of these assumptions. The sex, color, country of birth, length of residence in district, rent paid, knowledge of government, and schooling ratios were practically the same in both groups. It can therefore be said that these variables were kept fairly constant during the experiment. The important remaining variables

[1] The material on the original schedules was transferred to the Hollerith punch cards, sorted, and counted on a card-counting machine.

whose measurement could not be reduced to such simple terms were the nature of the election system and the nature of the party organization. In all but four cases the citizens in both groups were taken from the same voting precincts and in all cases from the same wards. The ward committeemen appoint the party representatives in the various precincts. It is reasonable to assume that a precinct captain will work one half of his constituency just as thoroughly as the other half, if the two halves are selected at random. It is also reasonable to assume that in a compact district, not taking more than four blocks, the variation in the inconvenience experienced by the citizens in voting in a polling place located within the district will not be very great. Persons who are unwilling to admit these assumptions will say that our experimental technique falls down at this point.[1] Recognizing these difficulties, the data is submitted for what it is worth.

After the experimental and control groups had been selected, the next problem was to determine the method which would be followed in stimulating voting. After much deliberation, it was decided that individual non-partisan appeals sent through the mails would be the least likely to establish con-

[1] For a discussion of the difficulties encountered in one of the districts, see below, p. 55.

tacts between the experimental and control groups and would be the easiest appeals to make. The nature of these appeals will be described in the next chapter. Inasmuch as the previous study of non-voting showed that the great bulk of the non-voters were not registered,[1] emphasis was placed upon increasing registration. In Chicago there is a new general registration every two years before each congressional election and intermediate registrations before all other elections. Consequently, anyone in the city who wished to vote in the presidential election of November 6, 1924, had to register in his precinct on one of the two general registration days held in October. Those who did not register in October or who moved from their voting district sometime after October 14 were obliged by law to register on February 3, 1925, if they wished to vote in the aldermanic election of 1925. On all of these registration days watchers were sent out with credentials from the County Court to observe the process and look for factors that might affect the proportion of adult citizens that registered in the district. Although some irregularities were observed, they were not of such a character as to prejudice the result of the experiment.[2]

[1] *Op. cit.*, p. 37.

[2] Some persons were registered who did not live in the district or who were disqualified for some reason or other.

The final step in the experiment was the ascertainment of the actual voting response of the six thousand citizens interviewed. As in the case of registration, watchers were assigned to each of the precincts. The observations of these watchers proved later to be very useful in interpreting the results.[1] The voting response of each of the citizens studied was not obtained until three weeks after the election when the pollbooks were made available. The pollbooks are the records of the names and addresses of the voters in the order of their appearance at the polls. These names were checked off against the names on the printed lists of registered voters in order to identify those who had registered but did not vote. Our failure to find a person's name upon the registration list was taken as prima facie evidence of that person's non-registration. Direct computations of the number of non-registrants could not be made from the printed list because of inaccuracies in the lists.[2] Furthermore, it could not be assumed that any person interviewed whose name was not on the list was necessarily a non-voter. The original canvass of the districts was made in the months of August and September, and

[1] There was some repeating, and many of the voters were given "instructions" in a manner contrary to law.

[2] On this point see J. P. Harris, *Registration Systems in the United States* (University of Chicago doctoral dissertation).

it was probable that persons whose names were not on the registration books had moved in October. Consequently, all of the persons in the districts who were not registered according to the official lists were canvassed again. Those who had moved were not counted in the experiment as it was certain that they had not received the notices sent out. Whether those who were recorded as having voted actually voted is another question that might reasonably be raised by an insistent critic. The answer to this would be that our own watchers, while not on the job continuously, were in the precincts long enough on election day to see what was going on. At any rate, the chief defense for the technique described above is that the sample was large enough to eliminate bias on account of chance variations.

It is conceivable that the results of the experiment described above might have been negative. If they had been negative, they might have been interpreted in one of two ways: either that some of the factors affecting the proportion of adult citizens who vote had not been taken into consideration or that the type of stimulation used was ineffective. The fact that the results were positive indicates that it is possible to measure the influence of a nonpartisan movement to get out the vote.

CHAPTER III

METHODS USED TO STIMULATE VOTING

In selecting the particular types of voting stimuli to be used in the experiment, we were aided by the reasons for not voting given by the non-voters interviewed in the previous study. Many citizens had said that they had failed to vote either because they could not find the polling place, or because they were sick or absent on registration day and did not know about the provisions of the law for absent registration, or because no one had informed them of the necessity of registering upon such and such a day, or because they were new to the city and did not know whether they were qualified as voters or not, or because they had never voted before and were ignorant of the process and timid regarding making a start.[1] It is obvious that such factors as those mentioned above could be almost entirely eliminated by co-operative action on the part of the precinct election boards and the local party organizations. The Board of Election Commissioners did send a letter to each of the voters who were regis-

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 69, 102, 178, 188, 198.

tered the previous spring calling attention to the fact a new general registration was to be held before the presidential election and pointing out that there were provisions in the law for absent registration. Precinct committeemen in many parts of the city did distribute notices to register to their constituents which gave information regarding the time and place of registration. The notices to register used in this study resembled the notices that were sent to the voters by other organizations. The superiority of our technique over that of the other organizations lay in the thorough and non-partisan character of the canvass. The letter sent out by the Board of Election Commissioners did not reach the great body of non-registered citizens, comprising at least two-fifths of the eligible voters, and the notices given out by the precinct committeemen were distributed in an irregular fashion. Our notices were sent to all the adult citizens in the districts studied regardless of their partisanship or previous voting record. The English version of the first card mailed to nearly three thousand eligible voters is given on page 25.

Polish, Czech, and Italian versions of this postcard notice were also printed and sent to the citizens who had indicated that they spoke one of these respective languages. Immediately after the first

day of registration, the public registers were examined and compared with our lists in order to ascertain how many in the experimental and how many in the control groups had registered. It was hoped that there would be some differential between the proportion of registered persons in the two groups.

NOTICE TO REGISTER

You cannot vote November 4 unless you register now. It makes no difference whether you were registered before or not; *you must register again* if you wish to vote for President, United States Senator, or Governor.

Registration Days will be *Saturday, October 4,* and *Tuesday, October 14.* You can register at your polling place on either of those days from 8:00 A.M. to 9:00 P.M. Your polling place is located at

---

In case you expect to be out of the city on both of these days, you can get your name on the new register by making application at the Election Commissioners' Office, 308 City Hall, anytime after October 4 and not later than noon, October 13.

Of the 2,986 citizens who were sent this post-card notice 42.3 per cent registered, as compared to 33.7 per cent of the 2,673 citizens interviewed who were not sent notices. In other words, there was a difference of 9 per cent between the two groups. This result appears more conclusive when it is pointed out that a spread of at least 7 per cent between the registration response of the experimental and control groups was found in all but three of the dis-

tricts, and in one of the districts the spread was 24 per cent. The result of the experiment at this stage indicated that it was possible to measure roughly the influence of mailing a notice before the first day of registration. The question remained, however, whether or not we had persuaded some citizens to register on the first day of registration rather than on the second.

The same 1,723 citizens who received notices but failed to register on October 4, 1924, were sent second notices several days before the second and final day of registration. The second notices were of two different types: one was factual, calling attention to the regulations which made voting impossible if the last chance to register was neglected, and the other was of a hortatory character, containing a cartoon and several slogans. The factual post card is given below, and the cartoon notice is reproduced on the opposite page.

REGISTER OR YOU CANNOT VOTE

You are *not* registered

OFFICERS TO BE ELECTED ON NOVEMBER 4

President of the United States
United States Senator
Governor
State's Attorney and other officers

Tuesday, October 14, between 8:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M. is your *Last Chance* to register

Your polling-place is located at

Your Vote is Your Voice in Government

USE IT!

Vote as You Please, but

VOTE!

IF YOU DON'T VOTE YOU DON'T COUNT
REGISTER OR YOU CANNOT VOTE

You are not registered

Your **last chance** to register is on Tuesday, October 14, between 8:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M.

Your polling place is located at

SLACKERS WHO FAIL THEIR COUNTRY WHEN NEEDED

In working out the effect of this second attempt to stimulate interest in registration, it was necessary to subtract the number of citizens who had registered on the first day from the total number interviewed. This was done because the second cards were sent merely to the group of those who had not registered on the first day. Of the 1,723 citizens who were sent one of the two notices 56 per cent as compared with 47.4 per cent of the 1,771 citizens who were not sent any notices registered on the second day of registration.

A comparison of results obtained on the second day of registration with those obtained on the first day shows them to be about the same. In both cases the difference between the experimental and control groups was 9 per cent. It is not claimed that the notices which were sent were in themselves the causes of the results produced. These notices were part of a complex of factors that interested people in voting in the fall of 1924. It might be said that in another election campaign where there was not the same interest in voting, the effect produced by the notices would be much less.

The general registration in all the precincts in Chicago in October, 1924, was a well-advertised event. The newspapers broadcasted the event, the county judge sent a personal letter to all whose

names appeared on the previous registration lists, the party workers put notices around in many of the mail boxes, and in many cases the party workers called on those who had not registered within several hours of the closing of registration. Our mail canvass had some effect on top of all these influences. Part of this effect may have been due to the novelty of the appeal. Some of the habitual non-voters had never received notices like the ones which we sent out. There was nothing on the cards to identify the organization which had sent them out and the return address on the envelopes which contained the cartoon notice was a blind. It is a good principle of advertising to arouse the curiosity of the potential customer. Our potential customers were the adult citizens in the selected districts. In order to make some sort of test of the chances of getting continuous results from the sort of mail canvass that was conducted, notices were sent in February to all the stimulated citizens who failed to register the previous October. This notice was printed in English alone, and a facsimile of it is given on page 30.

The intermediate registration which was held on February 3, 1925, was not advertised in the newspapers nor was much attention paid to it by the party workers. In some of the wards studied there

was no aldermanic contest inasmuch as the sitting alderman was unopposed for re-election. The only publicity given to the registration was that required by law, namely, the posting of bills in the polling places announcing the hours and date of registration. Under these circumstances it was to be expected that our mail canvass would have some positive results, provided the saturation point had not already been reached the preceding October.

REGISTER OR YOU CANNOT VOTE
for
ALDERMAN
You are not registered

Tuesday, February 3, 1925, between 8:00 A.M. and 9:00 P.M., is your only chance to register for the aldermanic election.

Your polling-place is located at

Election day is coming in February and with it your opportunity to choose the alderman who will represent you in the City Hall.

Of the 716 citizens who were sent registration notices 6 per cent as compared with 1 per cent of the 894 citizens who were not sent notices registered on February 3, 1925. The difference between the experimental and control groups in this experiment was not as large in absolute terms but it was much larger in relative terms than that obtained in the first two trials. The slight interest shown in registration by both groups together can be accounted for by the fact that there was no city-

wide contest at the coming election and there was no incentive for the party organizations to stimulate registration as they had the previous fall. Although our notices did not remedy this situation, they did change it to some extent. The citizens in the control group were much more apathetic on this registration day than were the citizens in the experimental group in spite of the fact that there were relatively many more habitual non-voters in the latter group than in the former. If a sufficient number of citizens had been studied it would have been possible to check up on the influence of notification at an off election even more accurately. Two elections could be studied at which the stimulated and non-stimulated groups were reversed. This was not done in our experiment because we were primarily interested in showing that the mail canvass had not reached a point of diminishing returns.

The results of the experiment up to the present point are summarized in Chart II.[1]

The registration records of the citizens in the experimental and control groups were so kept that it was possible to study the relative effect of the differ-

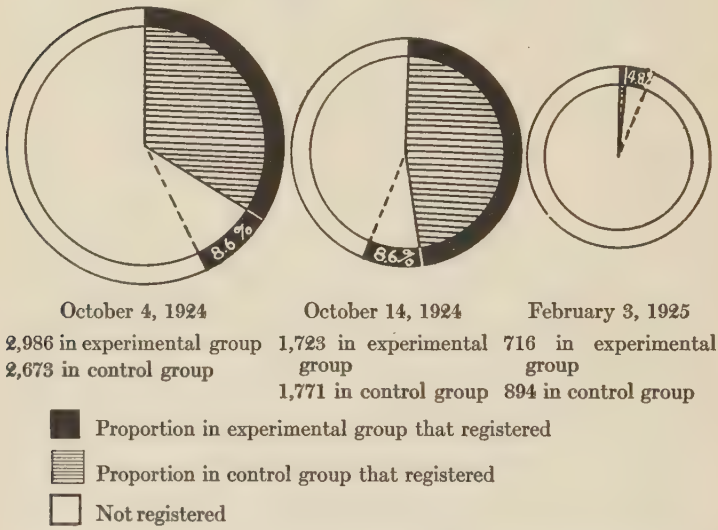
[1] The percentages given in white upon this and the succeeding charts (with the exception of Chart III) represent the differences between the experimental and the control groups. For the original percentages upon which the chart is based see Appendix A.

ent types of appeals made. The results of this study are given in Chart III.

One significant variation which stands out in Chart III is the relative superiority of the cartoon notice over the factual card among the women

CHART II

THREE ATTEMPTS TO STIMULATE REGISTRATION FOR VOTING IN CHICAGO

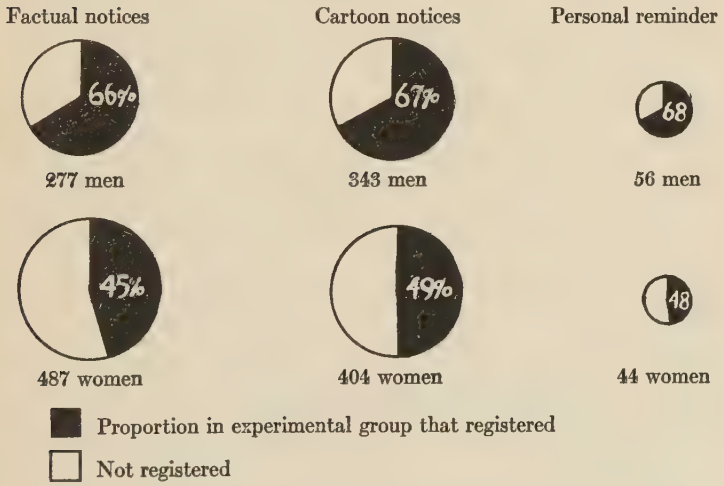


studied. Four per cent more of the women who received the cartoon notice registered than of those who received the factual card. There is no appreciable spread in the registration response of the men receiving the respective notices. This seems to support the popular notion that women are more subject to emotional appeals than men. One of the pre-

cinct captains informed the writer that the cartoon notice caused him considerable difficulty. His constituents did not like to be called slackers, and it was hard for them to believe that anyone other than the local leader had sent such a notice.

CHART III

REGISTRATION RESPONSE OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP ON OCTOBER 4, 1924 BY SEX AND SPECIFIED TYPES OF STIMULATION



The citizens who were personally reminded that October 14, 1924, was the last day of registration also received one of the two notices. The number approached in this fashion was so small that no general conclusions can be based upon the result. However, as far as the hundred persons in the group are concerned, it is apparent that a slightly larger

proportion of the men were brought out by the addition of this type of reminder.

Besides the trial of the three types of stimulation listed in Chart III, a test of another type was made upon a selected group of three hundred women. They were sent the *Election Number of the Illinois League of Women Voters*, a pamphlet of sixty pages which contained full information regarding the process of voting, a non-partisan review of the national and state issues, and a brief account of the candidates' records. The women who received copies of this bulletin had never voted before, and many of them had expressed a disbelief in voting. Since this group was a highly selected one, it has been difficult to establish a control for it. A special tabulation of the voting response of the habitual female non-voters who did not receive bulletins showed about the same proportion of voters as in the group that received the bulletins. Our method did not provide for any other check upon the effect of the circulation of these bulletins.

Since the two October registration days came so near to the November election, and since a high proportion of the registered voters always vote in presidential elections, it was thought unnecessary to send any special exhortations of our own regarding election day in November, 1924. However, offi-

cial unmarked sample ballots were sent to each of the registered voters that received one of our other notices. Our theory was that if the new registrants could see what the actual ballots looked like they might have less timidity regarding the process of voting. There were in all five ballots to be voted upon in the election of November 4, 1924, the general blanket ballot, a judicial ballot, and three proposition ballots. The actual size of the blanket ballot was thirty inches wide by thirty-six inches long.[1] It may well be that these ballots had an unfortunate effect upon some of the registered voters.

The results of the experiment to increase the proportion of the registered vote cast at the presidential election were nowhere near as convincing as the results of the experiments regarding registration. Of the 2,229 registered voters in the experimental group 92.4 per cent voted as compared with 91.4 per cent of the 1,710 registered voters in the control group. In the sample at large the distribution of the demonstration ballots made a difference of only 1 per cent. It is true that in three of the districts studied there was a difference of more than 10 per cent between the two groups, but in the remaining districts the results were inconclusive.[2] In

[1] The 1920 ballot was the same size.

[2] For complete tabulation, see Appendix A, Table IV.

the districts where there was a large difference between the two groups it may be assumed that the sample ballots formed a part of the complex stimuli which brought the electors to the polls upon election day.

The use to which the sample ballots were put is described by a middle-aged colored laborer in a foundry who had been in the city five years prior to the election. He had been voting ever since he was eligible to vote. The precinct worker first interested him in elections. He had attended school for less than a year and could neither read nor write but he did not feel handicapped in voting. He usually had no assistance in marking his ballot. He studied a sample ballot at home and counted the names which he expected to mark. He had a memorized system for his voting. Usually, however, he voted the straight Republican ticket, and "that's easy."

The presidential election was not an ideal one for experimentation on methods of getting out the registered vote. It was almost an assured fact that over 90 per cent of the citizens who went to the trouble to register at the general registration in October would vote in the November election. This was the situation in Chicago in 1920, 1916, and 1912. An off election or a local election would furnish

a better opportunity for arousing interest among those who were on the registration books. On the basis of this theory, the aldermanic election of February 24, 1925, was chosen. At this election, one alderman was to be elected or nominated from each of the fifty wards in the city, one superior court judge was to be elected by the voters of the entire county, and seven bond propositions were to be voted upon by the voters of the city. There was no contest for the judicial post inasmuch as all the parties agreed to support the sitting judge for the position, and in two of the wards studied there was no contest for alderman inasmuch as no one filed a valid petition to run against the sitting alderman. All the party and civic organizations in the city favored the seven bond propositions that were to be voted upon. Here was an opportunity to study, not only the methods by which the citizens might be interested in local affairs, but also to estimate the importance of the rivalry element in local elections. Since the experiment in the stimulation of registration conducted in the fall of 1924 showed that an emotional or hortatory appeal printed in English and sent out to the voters as first-class mail had about the same influence as a post card which was printed in the individual's mother-language, the notice used in the aldermanic election was a cartoon

Stockholders' Meeting

CITIZENS OF CHICAGO

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN

Comfortable Rapid Transit?
Honest Police Administration?
Improvements and Extensions?
Clean Streets, Clean Alleys?
Adequate Fire Protection?
Good Railroad Terminals?
Orderly City Government?

Then VOTE for ALDERMAN

IF YOU DON'T VOTE

The Hand That Rocks The Cradle Will

Election Day, Tuesday, February 24, 1925
The Polls will be open from 6:00 A. M. to 4:00 P. M.
Your polling place is located at

notice inclosed in a two-cent stamped envelope. Below and on the previous page are given the front and reverse sides of this notice.

INSTRUCTIONS TO VOTERS

For Election February 24, 1925

Polls Open from 6 A.M. to 4 P.M.

OFFICES TO BE FILLED

One Judge of the Superior Court One Alderman

Names of Candidates for the Above Offices will Appear on Separate Ballots

HOW TO VOTE

Upon receipt of the ballots you will retire at once and alone into a vacant voting booth.

Before marking your ballots, examine them again and see that the initials of the Judge have been written upon the back of each, under the printed official designation of the "Precinct and Ward."

Mark a cross, thus ☒ in the square before the name of the candidate for whom you wish to vote.

If you desire to vote for some one whose name is not printed upon the ballot, write in the name of such person in the blank space on the ballot under the designated office and by making a square immediately before the name thus written in and by placing a cross ☒ in such square.

VOTERS WILL NOT BE ALLOWED:

To mark ballots outside the booth.

To vote a torn or mutilated ballot.

To occupy a voting booth with another voter.

To exhibit the ballot voted to any person whomsoever.

VOTING ON PROPOSITIONS

In voting on the propositions submitted, make a cross ☒ in the square opposite the word "Yes" or the word "For," as the case may be, or opposite the word "No" or the word "Against," as the case may be.

Do not write anything on the ballot except crosses ☒ in the proper places unless it be the name of some person for whom you wish to vote and whose name is not printed on the ballot.

The "Instructions to Voters" was the new feature introduced into the experiment at this stage. Otherwise the type of appeal closely resembled the second registration notice sent to one-half of the experimental group on October 4, 1924. The important part of the instructions was the middle paragraph which described the procedure of voting for a candidate whose name did not appear on the ballot. In those wards where only one name appeared on the aldermanic ballot, it was possible for the voters to write in other names if they were not satisfied with the person who pre-empted all rights on the printed form. Mention of the procedure by which those who could not read English or who were unable to mark their ballots by reason of some physical disability could be given assistance in marking their ballots was purposely omitted. The writer on several occasions has seen this provision of the law grossly abused. In some precincts, nearly all

the voters received assistance ("Instructions") in marking their ballots. With these points in mind, we are now ready to consider the results of the mail canvass in connection with the aldermanic election of 1925.

Of the registered voters in the experimental group 56.9 per cent took part in the aldermanic elections as compared with 47.5 per cent in the control group. The difference of 9.4 per cent between the two groups is striking evidence of the possibilities of increasing the poll at local elections. In all but four of the districts the non-partisan appeal to vote brought positive results.[1] In only one of the districts did the notices apparently have a depressing effect. On the other hand, in seven of the districts studied, the difference between the proportion of the registered vote cast in the two groups equaled or excelled 9 per cent. This furnishes clear evidence that the superiority of the voting record of those who received the circulars was not due merely to spurious factors, but to the constant factor which we were introducing. Since the local conditions affecting the aldermanic contests in the twelve districts studied were very different, the consideration of the results in detail will be left to the next chap-

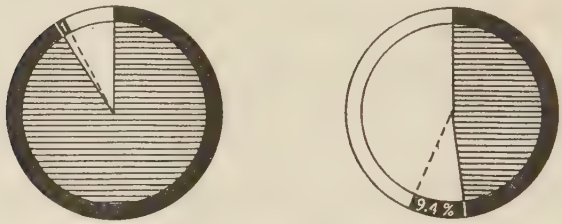
[1] See Chart VII, p. 69.

ter. Chart IV summarizes the results of the two experiments to increase the proportion of the registered vote cast.[1]

Up to the present point the effect of the different types of stimulation have been taken up separately.

CHART IV

Two Attempts to Increase Registered-Vote Cast



Presidential election
November 4, 1924

2,229 registered voters in experimental group
1,740 registered voters in control group

Aldermanic election
February 24, 1925

2,104 registered voters in experimental group
1,572 registered voters in control group

Proportion in experimental group that voted

Proportion in control group that voted

Registered voters that did not vote

The attempts to increase the proportion of the registered vote cast has been considered apart from the prior experiment to augment the proportion of adult citizens that registered. However, in all of these trials the experimental and control groups were taken from the same reservoir of citizens. In other

[2] See Appendix A, tables for charts IV and VII.

words, the total effect of the experiment, i.e., the cumulative influence of the notices, has not been considered up to the present moment. Chart V, based upon the entire number of adult citizens studied, gives the total effect of the stimulation with reference to the fall registration, the presidential election and the aldermanic election, in each case the data being classified by sex.[1]

This chart clearly corroborates the conclusions of the non-voting study regarding the importance of sex as one of the factors causing non-voting. As far as the present experiment is concerned the chart shows that women are slightly more susceptible to non-partisan appeals in national elections than are the men. The difference between the voting response of the experimental and control groups composed of adult male citizens was under 9 per cent while that of the female citizens was over 10 per cent. This difference did not persist in the aldermanic election. The latter election showed clearly the indifference of the female electors toward local politics. Roughly speaking, one-quarter of the non-stimulated women and one-third of the stimulated women voted in the aldermanic election. On the other hand, the attempts to augment the number of male voters at the local election were quite suc-

[1] See Appendix A, Table V.

CHART V

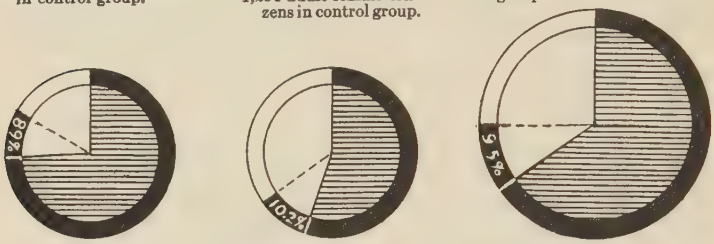
Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting

REGISTRATION

1,547 adult male citizens in experimental group.
1,439 adult male citizens in control group.

1,439 adult female citizens in experimental group.
1,294 adult female citizens in control group.

2,986 adult citizens in experimental group.
2,673 adult citizens in control group.

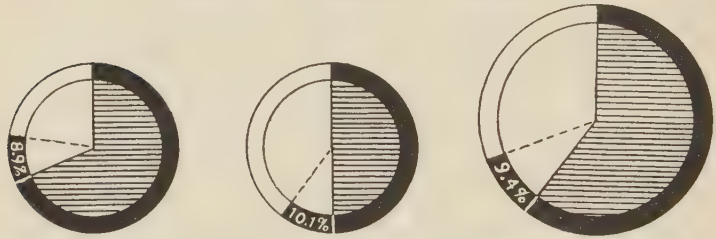


Proportion of total citizens in experimental group that registered

Proportion of total citizens in control group that registered

Not registered

VOTE CAST AT PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION



Proportion of total citizens in experimental group that voted, Nov. 4, 1924

Proportion of total citizens in control group that voted, Nov. 4, 1924

Proportion of total citizens that did not vote

VOTE CAST AT ALDERMANIC ELECTION

Proportion of total citizens in experimental group that voted, Feb. 24, 1925

Proportion of total citizens in control group that voted, Feb. 24, 1925

Proportion of total citizens that did not vote

cessful, partly due to the registration notices sent in October, 1924, but chiefly to the hortatory appeal mailed in February, 1925.

Up to this point it has been shown that the proportion of the citizens that registered in the experimental group was appreciably higher than in the control group on both the first and second days of registration, that a slightly larger proportion of the women who received the hortatory appeal registered than of those who received the factual notice, that a slightly larger proportion of the registered voters who received sample ballots voted in the presidential election than of those registered voters who did not, and that an appreciably larger percentage of the registered voters who were sent the notice regarding the aldermanic election took part in that election than of those who were sent no notice. At each stage of the election process and at different elections, the non-partisan mail canvass to get out the vote had a stimulating effect upon the voting response of the citizens studied.

CHAPTER IV

EFFECT OF PARTY ORGANIZATION ON VOTING RESPONSE

The most difficult factor to control in the experiment was the varying strength of the local party organizations. Where the Republican, Democratic, and Progressive precinct committeemen were extremely active, a high proportion of the eligible vote was cast as a matter of course. Our efforts to increase that proportion could easily be made to appear futile. The precinct committeemen could send out notices to register, they could distribute sample ballots to all their constituents, and on election day they could get a sufficient number of helpers to check up on the progress of the election in their precincts and to send for the tardy voters.[1] That our efforts did have some effect indicates that the precinct committeemen did not do all these things. In a given precinct there may be an efficient Democratic precinct committeeman and an inefficient Republican committeeman, or vice versa. In districts where all the parties did not have energetic precinct captains, it was possible to stimulate voting by the

[1] There is no question but that the precinct captain described in *Non-Voting*, pp. 203 ff., did all of these things and more besides.

most ordinary devices. Even in the highly organized districts we might hope to influence the independent voters who discounted all partisan appeals but who were better disposed toward literature that came from non-partisan sources.

Whatever the skeptic may say about the assumptions underlying the present study, the fact remains that the notices did have some effect upon the voting response in two elections of the citizens studied in the twelve districts. The variations in the success of the experiment as between the different districts can be explained for the most part in terms of local party differences. In general, the notices had the least effect where there were strong and the greatest effect where there were weak local party organizations.

There are two tests that might be used to measure the efficiency of local party organizations in the United States. One is the percentage of the adult citizens registered in the given district and the other is the percentage of the registered votes cast in that area. Since it is practically impossible to obtain accurate statistics regarding the number of adult citizens by local election districts, the easiest test to apply is the one depending upon the election registers. However, in this study considerable time, effort, and money were spent to ascertain the exact

number of adult citizens in twelve selected districts in Chicago. Therefore, the registration test of party efficiency is the one which will be given most attention. Chart VI shows the registration response of the experimental and control groups by districts.[1]

In order to understand the factors that caused the considerable variation in the success of the experiment as between the different districts, it will be necessary to interpret the results of the experiment by districts.

Seventy per cent of the control group in the Gold Coast precinct registered in October, 1924. This excellent registration record did not indicate necessarily the presence of highly efficient local party organizations. The bankers, manufacturers, brokers, and other wealthy business and professional men that lived in this district took a lively interest in the presidential election of their own accord. Some of them were heavy contributors to the Republican campaign chest; the names of two of them appeared on the ballot as presidential electors; and others held important positions in the party-committee hierarchy. These men and their wives lived in palatial mansions or apartments which were carefully guarded by liveried butlers and doormen. It was practically impossible for a party worker to make a

[1] For complete tabulation of percentages, see Appendix A, Table VI.

CHART VI

RESULTS BY DISTRICTS OF EXPERIMENT TO INCREASE REGISTRATION, CHICAGO, OCTOBER, 1924

WEALTHY NATIVE WHITES
(Gold Coast)

242 in experimental
265 in control group

WELL-TO-DO WHITES
(Hyde Park)

263 in experimental
285 in control group

POOR NATIVE WHITES
(Near South Side)

165 in experimental
143 in control group

NEGROES
(Douglas)

197 in experimental
128 in control group

IRISH
(Carnartville)

247 in experimental
163 in control group

GERMANS
(Lakeview)

298 in experimental
240 in control group

SWEDES
(Lakeview)

384 in experimental
305 in control group

RUSSIAN JEWS
(Lawndale)

250 in experimental
233 in control group

CZECHS
(West Side)

227 in experimental
173 in control group

POLES
(South Chicago)

243 in experimental
286 in control group

POLES
(Back of the Yards)

275 in experimental
241 in control group

ITALIANS
(West Side)

193 in experimental
213 in control group

Proportion in experimental group that registered

Proportion in control group that registered

Not registered

canvass of all the people in this district such as he could in a working-class district. A canvass of the domestics was hardly worth while from the party standpoint because such a large proportion of the servants were aliens or habitual non-voters. The men in the district were reminded of their electoral duties by the paid secretaries of the Association of Commerce, the Union League Club, or some other organization whose headquarters were located in the business center of the city, and the women of the district were kept in mind of their duty to register and vote by the League of Women Voters, the Woman's City Club, or some other centrally located association. The non-partisan mail canvass, added to these influences, brought out approximately 10 per cent more of the adult citizens. The way in which the notices helped to increase the proportion of eligibles that registered in this district is indicated in the following letter:

October 15, 1924

Citizens Committee
6420 Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago

Since you were kind enough to send Mrs. G— and me a notice of non-registration some reply is due you. Owing to an accident we are still at our country place in Connecticut but have taken advantage of the new law providing for the registration of legal voters, who by reason of illness or otherwise are unable to be in Chicago on

registration days. We sincerely hope that our papers (blanks sent us by the Board of Election Com'rs) are all right and that we shall be able to vote as we shall be home in time for election.

Very sincerely,

C. O. G—

Mr. and Mrs. G— were informed of the "new law for absent registration" by our first notice. Since they did not register on the first day, they were sent the second notices. Their papers arrived in time for the second day of registration and both of them voted for president. The diagram clearly indicates that there were many other persons influenced in this or in some other manner by the notice.

On election day, the Republican precinct captain urged all who came in to tell their friends to vote early. Most of his constituents had automobiles and did not need to be brought to the polls. Although "Society Was Out Early to Cast Its Ballots" and the Gold Coast went "Seriously about the Business of Voting,"[1] those who received our notices

[1] *Chicago Herald and Examiner,* November 5, 1924. The feature article gave the following story about one of the citizens in the control group:

" 'Madame, you can't vote. You aren't registered.'

" 'Oh, but I am,' said the pretty lady in the green outfit, touched with soft, light-brown fur, 'I registered last spring.'

" 'But you should have registered again this fall.'

"The lady in green covered her embarrassment with a luscious smile, and hurried back home, having learned that one must register early and often."

came to the polls in larger numbers than those who did not.

In the Hyde Park precinct, the percentage of the control group that registered in October, 1924, was slightly less than the average for the entire sample. In other words, the inhabitants of this university neighborhood did not show an extraordinary interest in politics.[1] Eight per cent more of the citizens in the experimental group registered than of those who did not receive any of the notices. Although it was easier to canvass this district than to canvass the Gold Coast precinct, the party workers did not make a complete canvass for the fall election. The professional men and the small business men who lived in the area acquired their political views largely from the newspapers. Since most of the voters were Republicans, the Republican precinct captain was sure of carrying the precinct if a fair proportion of his constituents came out. He kept track of the people who lived in a huge apartment building that was under his care, but he did not bother much with the home-owners and well-to-do apartment dwellers who lived at the opposite end of his district.

[1] The precinct was near the University of Chicago. One portion of it along a business street could hardly be called typical of the University neighborhood. This portion contained part of the non-stimulated citizens. On the other hand, the people who lived in this portion did not differ widely from the stimulated citizens who lived in a huge apartment building.

The permanent residents of the neighborhood took care of their election matters for themselves. They were either regular voters or could not be persuaded to vote by the methods that are usually employed by precinct captains. The notices to register had a greater effect upon the male citizens that lived in this district than upon the female citizens. One reason for this is the fact that the local League of Women Voters had already done a considerable amount of educational work among the settled residents, and another is that the cashiers, clerks, and stenographers who lived in the old-fashioned apartment building were too busy with their daily occupations to bother with politics. The apparent failure of the sample ballots to stimulate voting in the presidential election may have been caused by a feeling of cynicism or by a chance variation in some physical factor such as mobility.

The precinct on the Near South Side selected for analysis was in a depreciated residential area about one mile from the business center of the city. While the tenements and lodging-houses in the district were populated largely by native Americans, there was also in them a conglomerate mixture of German, Swedish, Italian, Russian, Negro, and Chinese elements. On the face of the returns the voting response of the citizens in this district closely resem-

bled that of the citizens in the Hyde Park district. However, the party organizations in the two precincts were vastly different. The Democratic precinct captain of the lodging-house precinct was an absolute czar of the political affairs of his domain. He was an employee in the County Building, and he kept his position by virtue of his ability to deliver the vote in his precinct. Since many of his constituents were transients and some of them incognitos, he had to exert extraordinary efforts around election time. On top of his efforts our notices regarding registration and voting apparently had little effect, at least as far as the men were concerned. The newspapermen, the chauffeurs, the city workers, the mail carriers, and the transportation workers who came under his jurisdiction did not need to be reminded by any non-partisan agency about voting. The drunkards and tramps were numbered among his "voting cattle." On the other hand, the spread between the proportion of the women in the experimental and control groups that registered in this precinct was 12 per cent. Some of the women who received the notices to register had never voted before, but they voted in the presidential election of 1924. The mail canvass to get out the vote may have been one of the factors that caused a change in their habitual attitude toward voting. The meth-

ods which the party workers used to get out the women's vote were resented by some of the waitresses, workingmen's wives, and elderly spinsters in the district. They would not associate with the "voting flappers" and cabaret girls, whose votes the party workers had bought by hundreds.

Chart VI indicates that the greatest amount of non-voting and also the most positive result as far as our experiment was concerned were found in the colored precinct located in the heart of the South Side "Black Belt."[1] One possible explanation of this is the fact that the experimental and control groups were not located in the same voting precinct. In other words, the factor of party organization may not have been kept constant throughout the experiment. However, a recanvass of some of the citizens who received the registration notices was made after the election, and their testimonial was uniformly to the effect that they had been greatly helped in understanding the voting process by the notices which they had received. The notices made them feel that they were part of the citizenry of Chicago and not merely the members of a local Republican organization which their neighbor, the precinct captain, was interested in promoting. The negroes who lived in this district were nearly all working-class

[1] For a description of this precinct, see *Non-Voting*, pp. 207–13.

people. Many of them were illiterate, having had no early educational opportunities. Some of them complained of their ignorance regarding the process of voting, the resultant of their disfranchisement in the South. These factors combined to make them a group which was peculiarly susceptible to our type of experimenting.

The way in which the notices to register actually stimulated interest in voting among the negroes can be clearly illustrated by citing a few cases. Mrs. H— had been in the city four years but was never interested in voting until the fall of 1924. She "got some mail" telling her about registration, and the precinct worker visited her and reminded her. She and her husband had been having trouble and finally separated. She thought that he registered and voted although he did not go to the polls with her. She used to be opposed to woman suffrage but she has "learned something," and changed her mind. Mr. and Mrs. W— likewise had never registered until October, 1924, although they had been in the city for three years. Mr. W— had just recovered from his timidity and felt less ignorant about the process. He had attended a few political meetings and heard "the men discussed," and had seen some sample ballots, and knew how to proceed on election day. He and his wife thought that "instructing

people" and "acquainting them with registration days, election days, and how to act when they get in the booth is a fine thing." Mrs. J— also received notices reminding her to register and thought it a fine thing. She placed hers on the wall just above the calendar so she would not under any circumstances forget it. (The notice was still there when the interviewer called a month after election day.) She thought that neglect and carelessness about registration and voting were due to ignorance.

In contrast to the undoubted success of the mail canvass in the colored district, Chart VI shows that our efforts to stimulate voting in a Stockyards district, inhabited largely by people of Democratic leanings and Irish descent, were not so fully rewarded. The attempt to augment the number of adult citizens registered for voting in this district was apparently successful on the first day of registration, but on the second day of registration the results of our mail canvass were inconclusive because the Democratic precinct captain whose constituents had not received notices made extraordinary efforts to secure a full registration.

On election day the same Democratic committeeman who had been so active on registration day was the target of some gunmen, who, missing him, hit

one of the early voters.[1] In spite of this occurrence few were deterred from voting in this precinct according to the returns certified by the election judges. These returns show that everyone in the precinct voted except the man who was shot. The methods employed to get out the vote were so effective that 105 per cent of the women registered in the precinct voted on November 4, 1924. An examination of the pollbooks after the election showed that the names of nine women appeared twice. Under the circumstances it was difficult to determine who were the voters and who the non-voters in the precinct. On the other hand, there were no election-day disturbances in the adjoining precinct containing the citizens who received our notices. Another factor which tended to equalize the voting response of the experimental and control groups was the unequal sex ratios in the two groups. However, in spite of all these difficulties, the results of the mail canvass in the presidential election were noticeable.[2]

[1] *Chicago Daily News,* November 4, 1924.

[2] Some of the citizens studied came from the same precinct. The results of the experiment were more apparent in this part of the sample.

The leader of the opposition in the precinct said that it was the custom for the election board to take the pollbooks in a back room after the election and write them up. This was evidently done in the presidential election of 1924. In the aldermanic election a careful check upon everyone who voted was kept by University students.

The German district studied was inhabited largely by skilled workers and small business men. While the citizens in this district were somewhat apathetic at the time of the presidential election of 1920,[1] four years later they were greatly interested in the national election. Sixty-five per cent of the control group and 77 per cent of the experimental registered in October, 1924. In 1920 many of the Germans in the city were disaffected by the part that this country played in the war, and they felt that the election afforded them no opportunity to give expression to their views. Four years later this feeling found expression in the advocacy of La Follette's candidacy. The Republican organization in the precinct, however, was very energetic in its support of President Coolidge. The forces that influenced the voting response of the citizens in this district can be clearly illustrated by citing a few cases. One middle-aged German-born woman who acquired her American citizenship by marriage said that she was not in the habit of voting. She had voted only once, and that was in 1916 when she voted for Wilson on account of the slogan, "He kept us out of war." She had not voted again because of her disappointment in Wilson's second administration. She received our no-

[1] About 56 per cent of the adult citizens as of the 1920 census enumeration registered in the fall of the year. There was a lapse of nine months between the census and the registration.

tices regarding registration and voted in the presidential election of 1924. Another woman never voted, and declared that she was not interested in politics. However, she intimated that she might be influenced to register if her husband would insist. Prior to sending our notices and our personal reminders no one had tried to influence her to vote. She registered and voted in the presidential election. It is interesting to note that the voting stimuli in this precinct had a greater effect upon the women than upon the men and that the information notice was superior to the cartoon notice. The word "slacker" on the cartoon notice probably revived war memories and therefore failed to arouse interest in voting.

Not far from the German district was a district inhabited by carpenters, skilled workers, and small tradesmen largely of Swedish extraction. The results of the experiment in this district appeared to be nearly as striking as in the colored district. A partial explanation for this may lie in the fact that the experimental and control groups were not subjected to the same party pressures, the former group being under the charge of more active precinct workers than the latter.[1] Mobility is another factor

[1] There were more potential La Follette voters among the non-stimulated than among the stimulated. For the significance of this, see below, p. 75.

which may explain part of the result inasmuch as the citizens in the control group lived near a business street and were consequently detached from the local community. Then, too, some portion of the differential may be traced to the fact that the interviewing in the control group was done largely after the two registration days and therefore furnished no spur to registration itself as it did in the other control groups. Although it is difficult to ascertain the precise influence of the registration notices in this district, there is evidence to the effect that they did have some influence. Practically all of the citizens who received notices and failed to register were habitual non-voters or were prevented from registering by some physical difficulty. On the other hand, there were many citizens in the control group who informed us that they had fully intended to vote but had failed to realize the necessity for registration. Mrs. F— was one of these. She insisted that she was a regular voter and that she wanted to vote for La Follette for president but was unable to because she had failed to register. A notice regarding registration would undoubtedly have proved effective in her case. It is interesting to note that among the citizens in this district the cartoon notice was slightly more effective than the information card. Many of the persons of Swedish birth had ex-

pressed a feeling of pride in their American citizenship.

The precinct studied on the West Side in the community called Lawndale was populated largely by Jews of Russian birth or descent. The tailors, retail dealers, clerks, and skilled workers in this district took considerable interest in voting. The community was more compact and homogeneous than some of the other neighborhoods discussed, and the social and political activities of the inhabitants were closely interrelated. Although the people living on the boulevard which formed one side of the precinct were largely Republicans, the people on the side streets were Democratic. The name of the Republican precinct captain appeared on the ballot as one of the presidential electors. On the other hand, the energetic Democratic precinct committeeman in the district was aided in his work by a general feeling of bitterness toward the law passed by a Republican administration which made it difficult for the new immigrants to bring their relatives to this country. The Democratic precinct captain was not content to rely upon this general feeling of antagonism toward Republicanism. He was a thorough canvasser and knew practically everyone in the district. Although many of the people on the side streets were Socialists at heart, few of them voted that way, and

the Socialist party had no official representative in the district. The fact that 71 per cent of the control group in this district registered indicates the strength of the party machines. This is practically the same record achieved by the efficient Irish precinct captain discussed above. However, Chart VI shows that our experiment was more successful in this district than in the Irish district. As with most of the other groups studied, the cartoon notice was relatively more effective with the women than with the men.

According to the test of party efficiency applied in this study, the party machine making the highest score was located in a Lower West Side precinct inhabited largely by unskilled workers of Czech birth. Three-quarters of all the control-group citizens registered. Over two-thirds of the names of the women citizens were on the registration books. The Democratic organization practically controlled the political affairs of the district, partly from the prestige that it gained from the presence of a state representative in the district. This legislator made many contacts with the men in his district at their clubrooms, while his wife busied herself with the organization of the women. In the fall of 1924 he was running for re-election, and his four-story apartment building was the scene of many campaign confer-

ences. In view of the thorough political organization of this district it could not be expected that our stimulation would have an enormous effect. Six per cent more of the experimental group in the district voted than of the control. Among the Czechs, the information cards were more effective than the cartoon notices, probably because they were printed in Czech whereas the cartoon notices were printed in English.

The Democratic organization in a South Chicago precinct was practically as efficient as the organization in the Czech district. The precinct was located in an old Polish community that had been established around 1900 by the unskilled laborers employed by the steel mills in South Chicago. The percentage that registered in the control group was the highest of any of the districts. The voting record of the women in the neighborhood who did not receive our notices was about the same as that of the well-to-do native whites. The party committeemen in the precinct did most of their work through personal contacts. There were no party clubs, but most of the eligible voters knew their alderman and their ward committeeman. The residents of the district were decidedly clannish, and all the members of a given family usually voted the same way. The diagram shows that the experiment was about as suc-

cessful here as in the Irish and the Czech precincts. The strength of the party organizations in the district made it difficult to increase the interest shown in voting. Although the post card regarding registration sent to the Poles in this district was printed in Polish, it was slightly less effective than the pictorial notice with slogans printed in English.

The citizens of Polish extraction who lived back of the Stockyards did not show the same interest in voting that was shown by the Poles of South Chicago. The inferior voting record of the women in the Stockyards settlement was especially striking. Only 36 per cent of the female citizens in the district voted on November 4, 1924. Although the district was controlled by the Democratic organization in local elections, Coolidge carried it in the presidential election. John W. Davis' failure to arouse enthusiasm among the working classes living on the West Side of Chicago may account in part for the apathy of the Democratic organization in the district in 1924. The success of the attempt to stimulate voting in this district may be explained on grounds similar to those given by Mrs. W—. She was one of the Polish women who had never registered, although her men folks were active in politics. When interviewed on the eve of the second October registration day she said that she had received some

notices regarding registration and had promised her husband that she would register. The registration books showed that she kept her word. There were several in the control group who declared that they had voted in 1922 when a prominent member of their nationalistic group was running for county judge, but had not been interested in elections since that time. As in the other Polish precinct studied, the cartoon notice had slightly more influence than the information card.

The Near West Side precinct analyzed was populated largely by Italians whose interest in voting was about equal to that shown by the native whites of native parentage. However, the voting record of the female citizens in the district fell considerably short of the voting record set by the native white women.[1] The differential of 15 per cent between the registration response of the experimental and control groups showed that the precinct workers had not done all that could be done to get out their constituents. Instead of trying to interest all their constituents in voting they padded their registration lists. On the first day of registration in October, several irregularities were observed by a watcher in the polling place. Contrary to the law, the registra-

[1] Only 45 per cent of the adult female citizens in the district registered in October, 1924 (see also *Non-Voting*, pp. 224–25).

tion data regarding some of the women in the district was written up on the basis of information furnished by their husbands, the women not appearing at any time in the polling place. A check was made upon some of the names and addresses appearing upon the registration books, and it showed many clear cases of fraud. It may be that the fraudulent registration list in this district concealed the real influence of our mail canvass to get out the vote.[1] However, there is no evidence that the party workers discriminated in any way between those who were sent notices and those who were not. Furthermore, the minors and non-residents whose names appeared upon the registration books were not counted in the experiment. Although the district is normally Democratic, Davis polled only a few more votes than Coolidge, and the Democratic candidate for governor ran behind Small, the Republican nominee. The name of a well-known Italian who lived in a nearby precinct appeared in the Republican column as a candidate for presidential elector. The post-card notices regarding registration which were printed in Italian were more effective than the cartoon notice with its English slogans. How the notices printed in Italian

[1] There was no differential between the proportion of stimulated and non-stimulated citizens that registered on the first day of registration.

overcame the timidity of some of the non-English-speaking Italians is indicated by the case of Mrs. S—. She was a middle-aged Italian woman who was brought to this country by her husband some time after he had settled here. She had never voted prior to the 1924 election because she felt that she would not know what to do at the polls. She received one of our notices and registered.

The second measure of party efficiency utilized in this study was the percentage of the registered vote cast. Inasmuch as presidential elections nearly always bring out an extremely high proportion of the registered voters, the study of the registered vote polled at a presidential election will not bring out clearly variations in party efficiency. The registration test, described above, is much better for that purpose. On the other hand, it is quite different with a local election, where variations in the proportion of the registered vote cast indicate significant differences in electoral organization. Consequently, the aldermanic rather than the presidential election has been selected for detailed application of the second test of party efficiency. Chart VII gives the results of the experiment to augment the number of voters in the aldermanic election.[1]

In two of the districts where the results of the ex-

[1] See Appendix A, Table VII.

CHART VII

RESULTS BY DISTRICTS OF EXPERIMENT TO INCREASE REGISTERED-VOTE CAST, CHICAGO ALDERMANIC ELECTION, FEBRUARY 24, 1925

WEALTHY NATIVE WHITES
(Gold Coast)

188 in experimental
162 in control group

WELL-TO-DO WHITES
(Hyde Park)

180 in experimental
192 in control group

POOR NATIVE WHITES
(Near South Side)

101 in experimental
91 in control group

NEGROES
(Douglas)

117 in experimental
46 in control group

IRISH
(Canartville)

177 in experimental
115 in control group

GERMANS
(Lakeview)

207 in experimental
149 in control group

SWEDES
(Lakeview)

264 in experimental
162 in control group

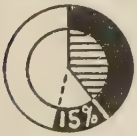
RUSSIAN JEWS
(Lawndale)

178 in experimental
169 in control group

CZECHS
(West Side)

176 in experimental
122 in control group

POLES
(South Chicago)



180 in experimental
194 in control group

POLES
(Back of the Yards)

190 in experimental
140 in control group

ITALIANS
(West Side)

148 in experimental
124 in control group

Proportion in experimental group that voted

Proportion in control group that voted

Proportion that did not vote

periment were inconclusive there was practically no contest in the aldermanic election. In the Near South Side precinct populated by poor native whites, only one name appeared upon the ballot that was used. This precinct is part of the bailiwick of the famous Hinky-Dink Kenna,[1] who made no exertions on February 24, 1925, inasmuch as no one of his constituents would think of writing in the name of a candidate opposing his friend, Alderman Coughlin. In the other precinct, namely, that populated largely by Russian Jews (Lawndale), there were three candidates but it was practically assured that the sitting alderman who was backed by the Democratic organization would be re-elected. This was the only district in which our cartoon notice failed completely to have any stimulating effect as far as we could observe. More of those who were not sent the notice voted than of those who were sent the notice. This failure can be accounted for partially by the fact that the citizens in the experimental group were largely Republicans whereas those in the control were Democrats. The Republican party workers did nothing at the aldermanic election; but the Democratic precinct captain, on the other hand, was active in getting out the vote so as to make a good showing for his alderman. Our

[1] See H. G. Wells, *The Future in America.*

experiment was inconclusive in this district because the factor of party organization was not kept constant.

It might be supposed from the study of the two precincts above that where there was no contest it was difficult to get out a larger proportion of the registered voters by a non-partisan appeal. However, the analysis of three other districts shows that this is not necessarily the case. There were no real contests in the Polish districts, or in the Italian district, but in all of these districts the experiment was apparently quite successful. The precinct captains in these districts showed no understanding at all of the study being made by the University of Chicago. Interviews with citizens in these districts who received the notices brought out the fact that they had been read with interest and that they had aroused considerable curiosity. The success of the experiment in these districts showed that electoral organization can bring results even where competition and live issues are lacking. Our notices evidently persuaded many to go through motions of making an electoral choice.

Where the aldermanic election was hotly contested it might be supposed that all those who could be interested in the election would be brought to the polls by the active partisans. In two of the districts

studied this was the case. In the Czech district the names of two persons appeared upon the aldermanic ballot and the rivalry between the two candidates was keen, and the proportion of the registered voters casting their ballots was higher in this precinct than in any other studied. All possible pressure was put upon the registered citizens by the party workers. Under the circumstances our mail canvass did not have any very noticeable effect. Those who had not voted by an hour before closing time were approached by the party workers with a fake telegram urging them to come out and vote for one of the candidates running for alderman. While there were no outstanding irregularities noticed during the election one or two cases were noted where a man was allowed to vote for members of his family. In the German district studied there was a fairly close contest, and the most conspicuous candidate was a man of German origin. The inconclusive results of our experiment in this district can be explained by the fact that the party workers got out as many of the voters as were interested in the election and the added spur of our canvass was not powerful enough to get out those who were not interested.[1] On the

[1] Another possible explanation of the inconclusive results is the fact that the mails have not functioned perfectly. It was difficult to find citizens who acknowledged the receipt of our notices.

other hand, the experiment was successful in the Irish and the Swedish districts even though the party organizations in these districts were active in rallying their adherents to the polls. A non-partisan canvass sometimes acts as a stimulant to voting even where the local contest is a close one.

In the districts where the local party organizations were weak, for one reason or another, our mail canvass in connection with the aldermanic election was the most successful. Precinct committeemen find the well-to-do native whites the most difficult to organize for local electoral purposes on account of their independence and inaccessibility. Consequently, we were not surprised to find that our efforts to increase the size of the poll were well rewarded in the Gold Coast and Hyde Park districts. On the other hand, electoral organization among the negroes in Chicago is very imperfect because of mobility and ignorance of the colored population. Here, also, our notices seemed to furnish a decided spur to electoral activity.

The detailed precinct studies given above have brought out several interesting facts about our mail canvass to get out the vote. The success of the canvass varied inversely with the strength of the local party organizations. When the local party pressures were strong, the additional spur of a nonde-

script post card or letter urging the receiver to vote had no striking effect. However, even in the most highly organized precincts studied, some measure of success was obtained. The precinct studies also show how local influences tend to neutralize one another when larger units than the voting precinct are taken for purposes of analysis. The extreme activity of the party workers in one district may be counteracted by the apathy of the party workers in another district. Peculiar factors such as excessive mobility and an unusual ratio between the sexes may be operative in one district and not in another. Consequently, in the charts that follow, the data from the precincts will be grouped together.

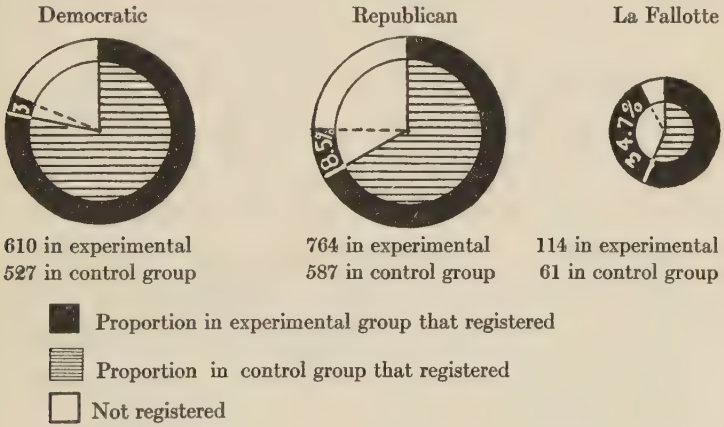
Precinct captains of the most efficient type are not necessarily interested in getting out a full registration or a full vote. If they cannot control the way in which the new registrants vote, or even if they are uncertain as to how the new registrants will vote, they might better confine themselves to their faithful constituents. In our study of non-voting, it was discovered that a clever Democratic committeeman studiously avoided the potential Republican voters in his district.[1] Chart VIII shows something about the success of the various party organizations in getting out their potential supporters

[1] *Op. cit.*, pp. 203 ff.

among the particular citizens studied. It may well be that the analysis of another group would bring different results. The analysis of the citizens under discussion is not complete inasmuch as many of those interviewed refused to reveal their party preference.

CHART VIII

TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION RESPONSE OF CITIZENS OF SPECIFIED PARTY REFERENCES



Considering the small number of people interviewed who were willing to admit before the election of 1924 that they planned to vote for La Follette, the apparent success of the experiment as far as potential La Follette supporters were concerned is not on a very firm basis. However, there is a plausible explanation for this success. The voters who were inclined toward the new Progressive move-

ment in the early fall of 1924 were studiously avoided by the regular party workers. The propaganda bureaus of both of the two major parties were distributing alarmist literature about the La Follette movement. Although the new movement had the support of many labor unions, it did not have local representatives in all of the precincts where there were potential La Follette supporters. The non-partisan mail canvass performed the same function for the Progressive voters that the regular party workers performed for the regular voters. It informed them regarding the necessity of registration and the time and place of voting. Their own interest in the election caused them to act upon this information. In other words, our figures seem to indicate that a non-partisan get-out-the-vote movement has a decidedly stimulating effect upon the independent voters.

Chart VIII also seems to show that in Chicago the voters of professedly Democratic leanings were much more highly organized in 1924 than those of professedly Republican leanings. The Democratic party in the city of Chicago draws its principal support from the foreign-language groups in the city. In the districts studied there happened to be energetic Democratic party workers who understood thoroughly the technique of interesting their con-

stituents in voting. The native whites of native parentage, the negroes, and the whites of German or Swedish parentage in Chicago belong for the most part to the Republican party. A partial explanation of the fact that only two-thirds of the non-stimulated Republicans registered may be found in the analysis of the colored precinct given above. Not only do the Republican party managers have considerable difficulty in getting out a full negro vote, but they also have to contend with apathy among the native whites. Both of these groups, when repeatedly reminded of the election, responded in larger numbers. Another explanation of the differential between the voting response of the Republicans and the Democrats may lie in the fact that the Republican party in the city was rent with factional strife in 1924 whereas the Democrats were fairly harmonious.

Inasmuch as the aldermanic contest was legally non-partisan, the voting response of the citizens studied in this election is not given by party preferences. In fact, the peculiar factors that operated in the local election, such as the absence of a contest in some of the wards studied, has led us to confine this and the remainder of the charts to the registration response at the presidential election of 1924.[1]

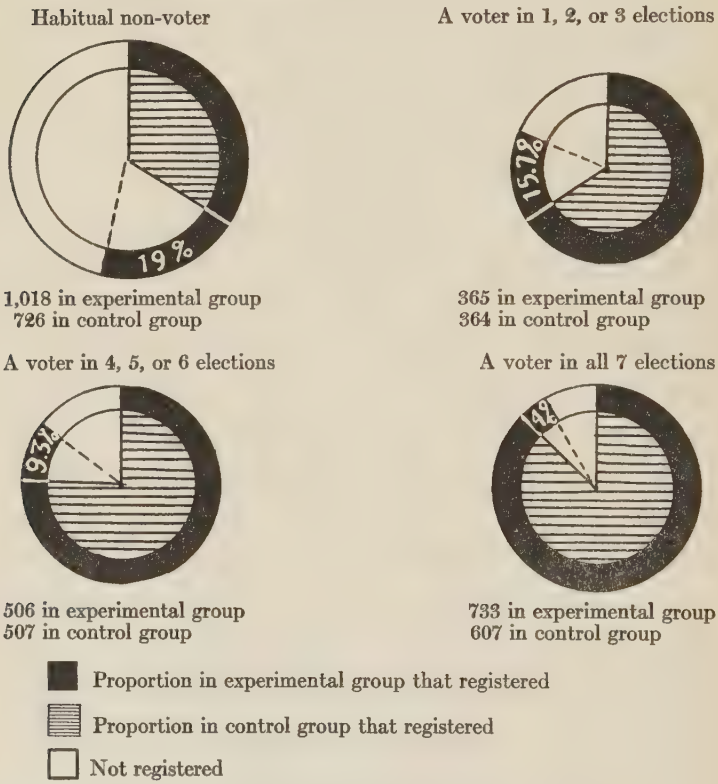
[1] Tables VIII–XVI in the appendixes give also the percentage of the adult citizens who voted on November 4, 1924.

One gauge of the combined strength of the party organizations as agencies for getting out the vote is

CHART IX

TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION OF CITIZENS OF SPECIFIED VOTING EXPERIENCE

Voting Record during 2-Year Period Prior to November, 1924



the continuous voting record of the citizens over a period of time. This information for the citizens interviewed is given in Chart IX, which shows the

relative success of the experiment to increase registration among citizens of different voting experience.[1] This chart shows clearly that the kind of notices which we sent out were the most effective among the habitual non-voters. The habitual non-voters are those whom the party workers have not yet reached with their various and sundry methods. They are the new members of the electorate who have not yet taken the first step toward the exercise of the franchise, the women with inferiority complexes, the citizens who have become disgusted with politics, and those who disbelieve in all political action. The general excitement of the presidential election of 1924 created a new attitude among them toward voting which furnished fertile territory for our experiment. On the other hand, it was not to be expected that our notices to register would have much effect upon the citizens who rarely miss an opportunity to vote.

It has now been established that the non-partisan mail canvass brought out a larger vote both at the presidential and at the aldermanic elections than was brought out by the party workers alone. This result was obtained uniformly in precincts which contained widely different political views, and which had widely varying types of party lead-

[1] See Appendix A, Table IX.

ers. Our success in getting a larger number of the adult citizens to register and vote was due to the fact that our canvass was a thorough one and we reached people of all kinds, many of whom had never been approached before on political matters. The notices which we sent out in following up this canvass had the greatest influence upon those who had never voted before or who looked upon themselves as independent voters, not belonging to one of the two major organizations. The quantitative effect of our notices varied with the strength of the local party organization and the previous voting record of the citizens who received them.

CHAPTER V

RACIAL AND ECONOMIC INFLUENCES UPON VOTING

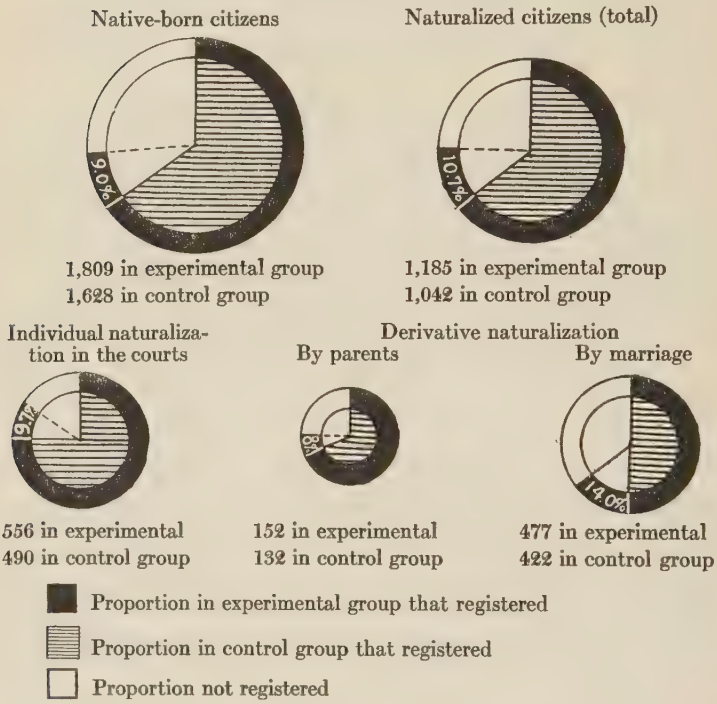
The fact that the largest proportion of the eligible vote cast was in precincts inhabited for the most part by persons of foreign origin raises the general question as to the relative interest of the native-born and the foreign-born in politics. Closely related to this question is the comparative political interest of the different economic groups inasmuch as the foreign-born are for the most part working-class people. While in a large city like Chicago the different economic groups tend to congregate, the territorial basis of the economic groupings is not always clearly defined. The trade unions and business men's associations are recruited from all over the city. Another variable related to the racial and economic factors is the time that the citizens have lived in a given district. The close connection between the variables of place of birth, rent paid, and term of residence at the same address makes it convenient to consider them together.

The results of the attempt to increase registra-

tion are given in Chart X, accorded to five different classes of American citizens.[1]

CHART X

TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF CITIZENS



The persons who secured their American citizenship by individual naturalization were almost entirely men.[2] Many of them had taken out their pa-

[1] See Appendix A, Table X.

[2] Concomitantly with the voting study, a study of naturalization was being made in the same districts.

pers for the express purpose of being able to vote. It was certainly to be expected that they would exercise their right to vote upon all occasions possible. Although at first sight it appears that those who became citizens by individual naturalization took more interest in voting than the native-born, a tabulation of the voting response of the native white males shows that this is not so. While we were able to stimulate a few more of the foreign-born than of the native-born men, the percentage of the eligible vote cast in each of the two groups was about the same. It is between the voting response of the foreign-born and the native-born women that there is a distinct differential. Only 50 per cent of the control group composed of women who acquired their American citizenship by marriage were registered voters. On the other hand, 60 per cent of the control group of native white women were registered. It is apparent that there was much more opportunity for improvement among the foreign-born women than among the native-born. Consequently, there is no trouble in understanding why the experiment was more successful in the former group than in the latter. Except for the case of the native-born and the foreign-born white women, practically the same interest was shown in voting by the foreign-born and the native-born. The for-

eign-born women who do not vote are balanced off against the colored women who do not vote, and percentages based on the totals for the foreign-born and the native-born citizens are therefore practically the same.

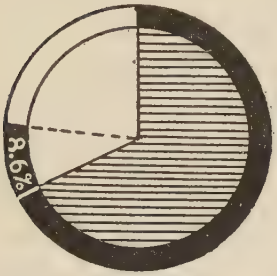
The similarity between the voting habits of the native-born and the foreign-born citizens becomes more apparent, when Chart XI is considered, which gives the effect of the attempt to increase the number of citizens registered by color and country of birth.[1] With the exception of the colored, the Scandinavian, and the English groups, two-thirds of each of the racial or language groups considered registered in October without the help of our notices. The mail canvass tended to equalize the proportions of adult citizens that registered in each of the respective groups. In other words, the proportions that registered in the experimental Czech and Negro groups were much closer to one another than the respective proportions in the two control groups. The voting stimuli had the greatest effect among the colored, the Scandinavians, and the English, as might be forecast by precinct studies. The Italians were the only group that seemed to respond in proportionately larger numbers to an appeal sent out in their own language. The Irish were the least af-

[1] See Appendix A, Table XI.

CHART XI

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration of Citizens by Country of Birth and Color

UNITED STATES
(White)



1,566 in experimental group
1,492 in control group

UNITED STATES
(Colored)

246 in experimental group
129 in control group

IRELAND

93 in experimental
55 in control group

GERMANY

125 in experimental
120 in control group

SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

199 in experimental
152 in control group

ENGLAND AND CANADA

49 in experimental
39 in control group

CZECHO-SLOVAKIA

117 in experimental
118 in control group

RUSSIA

157 in experimental
140 in control group

ITALY

135 in experimental
172 in control group

POLAND

182 in experimental
144 in control group

OTHER FOREIGN COUNTRIES

123 in experimental
101 in control group

fected by our notice. It should be noted that the number of those born in Ireland was smaller than that of most of the other groups. A tabulation of the ninety-three persons born in Ireland who received our notices showed that an unduly large proportion of them were women, many of whom were widows with little interest in politics. If allowance is made for this error in the sample, the results are more like those in the other groups studied.

According to Chart XI the most politically minded racial group in the Chicago sample studied was not the Irish but the Czech group. The probable explanation of this situation has been given in connection with the precinct studies. Furthermore, it should be noted that the difference is very small. If the men alone in the control groups are considered then our figures show that the Irish take their usually assigned place as the most active in politics. The Czechs in our study showed a high percentage of voters because such a large proportion of the Czech women registered and voted. Even the native white women did not have as good a voting record as the women born in Bohemia. However, among the female citizens in the respective experimental groups, where the partisan influences were more nearly equalized, the native whites surpassed all of the other groups. The Germans, the Jews, and

the Poles made practically as good voting records as the Irish, Czechs, and native whites. In accordance with the general observation made above, the effect of our stimulation was not large in any of these groups, inasmuch as the groups were already highly organized politically.

The least politically active groups of the respective sex, color, and racial groups studied were made up of colored, Swedish, and Italian women. Next to these groups came the Irish and Polish women. While the German women in the district studied had made a poor voting record in 1920, their record in 1924 was practically as good as that of the Jewish, Czech, and native white women. It is interesting to note that the color or racial groups from which domestic servants are largely recruited made relatively poor records. It was among the women who had not yet established voting habits that our voting stimuli secured the most marked response. The difference between the proportion of registered in the experimental and control groups made up of colored, Swedish, and Italian women was over 14 per cent.

It is clear from Chart XI that there is no constant relation between non-voting and recency of immigration. While many of the Italian and Polish women did not vote and could not be persuaded to

vote, on the other hand the women of Bohemian or Jewish ancestry could hardly be kept away from the polls. All of these groups are regarded as part of the so-called new immigration. However, it cannot be inferred from the foregoing observation that the citizen's term of residence in the city and in the local community does not have a very important influence upon his attitude toward voting. Chart XII shows that there is a correlation between the voting response and mobility as measured by term of residence in the district.[1]

The citizens who had lived in their particular election district less than ten years had a much poorer voting record than the citizens who had been residents of their local community for ten years or more. The study of non-voting had brought out the importance of mobility and newness to the city as far as the establishment of voting habits was concerned.[2] The present study shows that it is possible to bring out a larger proportion of the newer residents than of the older residents by a non-partisan get-out-the-vote campaign.

The rents charged frequently have much to do with the length of time that persons remain in a particular neighborhood. The rent paid may also be used as a fair index of economic status. In this

[1] See Appendix A, Table XII.

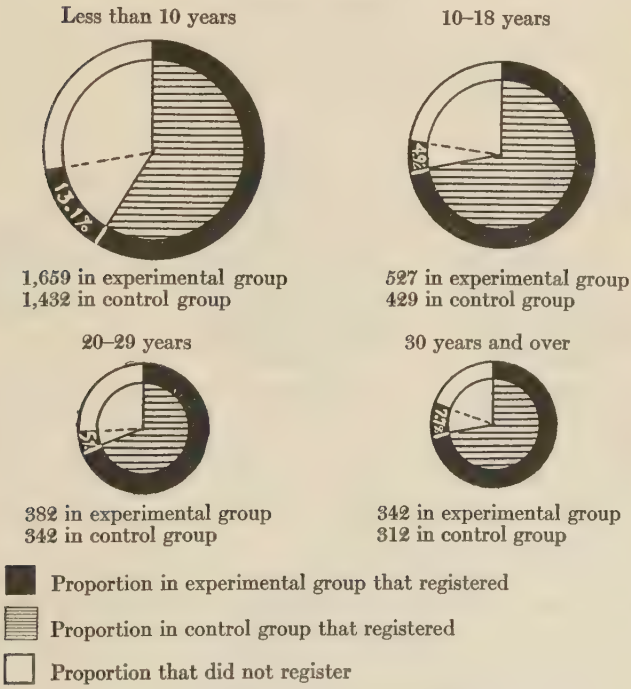
[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

study rents were figured on the basis of the monthly payments made per each adult person. Chart XIII

CHART XII

RESULTS OF REGISTRATION EXPERIMENT BY TERM OF RESIDENCE OF CITIZENS IN THEIR RESPECTIVE DISTRICTS

Years in district



shows the results of the experiment by three large rental groups.

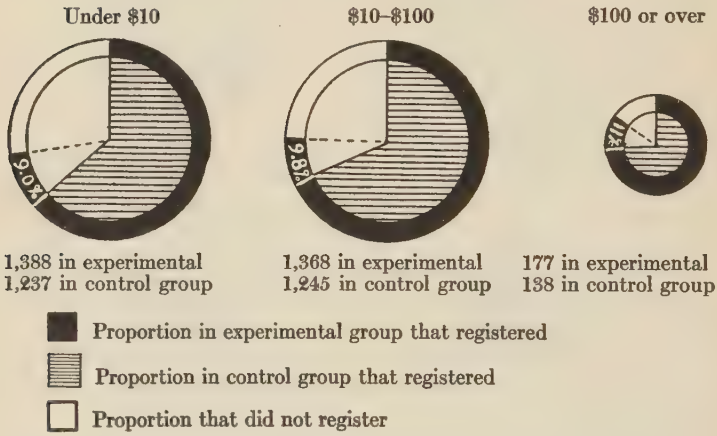
The most significant classes in Chart XIII are the first and the third, the former being made up of the very poor, the quarters in which they lived rent-

ing for less than ten dollars a month per person, and the latter being composed of the very rich, whose apartments or dwellings rented for more than a hundred dollars a month per person. The group of wealthy citizens given in this chart is much more

CHART XIII

TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION OF CITIZENS OF SPECIFIED ECONOMIC STATUS

Rent paid per month per person



homogeneous than the group given in the study of the Gold Coast precinct. The middle class given contains poor persons and persons with moderate incomes, whose apartments or cottages rented from ten to one hundred dollars a month per person. Whatever criticism may be made of the classes in this chart, the general trend revealed is quite apparent. The better the quarters that a citizen lives

in, the more apt he is to vote in presidential elections. Contrary to a previous observation made, the greatest success was found in a group which had an excellent voting record to start with. Proportionately more of the inhabitants of the Gold Coast were influenced by our notices than of the inhabitants of the slums. Any person who would interpret this as a salutary tendency should carefully note the comparative size of the two groups. The total mass of poor citizens helped pollward by our notices was far greater than that of the rich.[1]

It has now been shown that the voting response of the citizens studied was affected to some extent by their membership in different social and economic groups. Foreign birth and foreign-language training are to some extent associated with non-voting, but a mail canvass to get out the vote is just about as effective among the foreign-born as among the native-born, nor does there seem to be any great variation in the susceptibility of the different nationalistic groups to non-partisan civic appeals regarding voting. However, the colored women and the women born in Italy were slightly more responsive to our appeals than some of the other groups studied. The reason for this is undoubtedly that the political education of these two groups has been

[1] Appendix A, Table XIII.

sorely neglected. Both lack any kind of civic organization such as the League of Women Voters which is so strong among the native white women. The other group factors studied, such as term of residence and economic status, were more closely related to the success of our mail canvass. The notices to register brought the highest returns among the new residents of the city and among the very rich who of their own accord showed great interest in presidential elections, but who were difficult to reach by ordinary canvassing methods.

CHAPTER VI

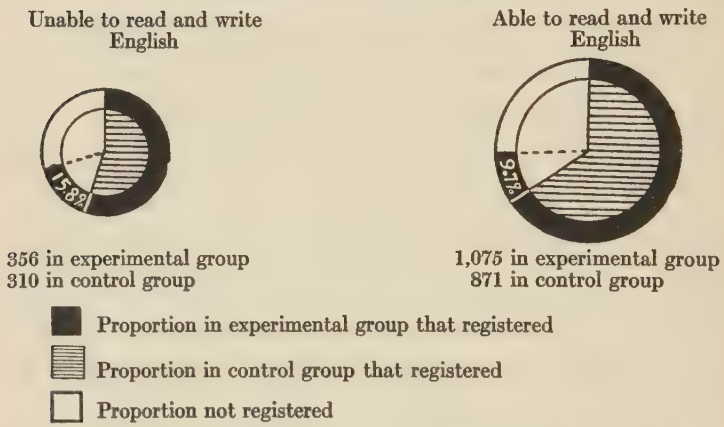
EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCES UPON VOTING

From the standpoint of controlling non-voting, the relative voting response of the educated and uneducated is a matter of considerable importance. If a lack of educational opportunities is closely correlated with non-voting, then the further question may be asked, What are the possibilities of adult political education? Will such a mail canvass such as that which we conducted bring out a larger proportion of those who are ignorant or timid regarding elections? The study of non-voting showed that many did not vote because they had never been initiated into the great body of electors. They had never been shown how to vote and they were timid about starting for fear that they might make some mistake and be ridiculed. Ignorance or timidity regarding elections was found to be an important cause of non-voting among the middle-aged white women of foreign parentage and among the young colored women who had never had any voting experience and who lived in the poorest parts of the city. It was also found to some extent among the

habitual male non-voters who had lived in the city but a short time and who were engaged in the unskilled occupations. Did the citizens who answered this description read the notices which we sent out and respond to them by registering and voting?

CHART XIV

TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION
RESPONSE OF LITERATE AND ILLITERATE
COLORED AND FOREIGN-BORN



With the exception of notices which were printed in Italian, Czech, and Polish, all of the notices to register and vote were printed in English. Consequently, a tabulation which shows the voting response of the literate and the illiterate is one of considerable interest. Such an analysis of our data is given in Chart XIV for those groups in which there is any considerable amount of illiteracy.[1] The na-

[1] See Appendix A, Table XIV.

tive whites were not included in this table because there were only two illiterates among those interviewed.

This chart shows that ordinarily more than half of those who cannot read and write English fail to vote. This clearly corroborates the non-voting study as to the poor voting records made by the illiterate negroes and the illiterate white women of foreign birth and foreign-language training. A mail canvass was conducted among representatives of these groups, and what was the result? The voting record of the illiterate foreign-born and illiterate negroes was brought up to a point that nearly equaled the voting record of the literates whether foreign-born or native-born! The experiment was most successful among the illiterate negroes and among the illiterate women of the new immigration who received the cartoon notice, with its English slogans. Our theory is that these women, not receiving much personal mail, were interested in the notices which we sent out and found someone to translate them. Whatever theory is adopted for explaining this chart, the fact remains that it shows significant and wide variations. Since a fairly high proportion of the literate citizens vote under ordinary circumstances, it was not to be anticipated that our mail canvass would have the same measure

of success among them that it had among the illiterate citizens. Those who could read and write English were able to follow the newspapers and were reminded of registration and voting by what they read.

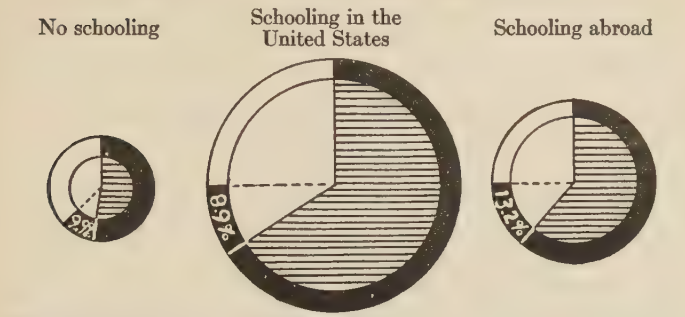
The ability to read and write English is not the only educational accomplishment that is associated with voting and elections. Elementary American history, geography, civics, patriotic songs and legends, and other subjects taught in the public schools form part of the great body of traditions that support the election system in this country. Concrete proof of this is given in Chart XV[1], which shows the results of the mail canvass by groups of different types of schooling. The years in school have been conveniently grouped under four headings so as to bring out clearly the broad trends. On the original cards appear the exact number of years that each person spent in school. Those who spent eight years in school are classed as grammar-school graduates, twelve years in school was regarded as the equivalent of a secondary-school education, sixteen years or over in school as equal to a college or university education.

The same attitude toward voting that was manifest among the illiterates was revealed among those

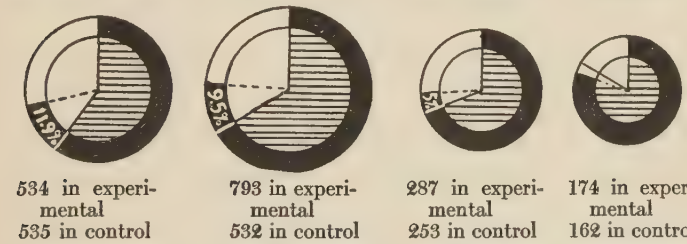
[1] See Appendix, Table XV.

CHART XV

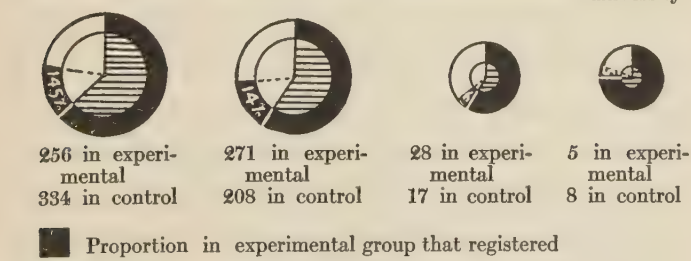
TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION RESPONSE OF CITIZENS OF SPECIFIED SCHOOLING



EXTENT OF SCHOOLING IN THE UNITED STATES



EXTENT OF SCHOOLING ABROAD



Proportion in experimental group that registered

Proportion in control group that registered

Proportion not registered

who had had no schooling. The two classes overlapped to a considerable extent. Those who could not read and write English were the more inclusive class and had a slightly superior voting record.

The part of Chart XV giving the voting response of those citizens who had schooling in the United States shows that the more schooling the individual has the more likely he is to register and vote in presidential elections. From this it follows that highly educated native-born Americans are not to be affected by a non-partisan get-out-the-vote mail canvass in a presidential year, whereas persons having less than eight years of schooling in the country are. In other words, our mail canvass tended to counteract the differential that years in school produced in the voting response of the citizens studied.[1]

The lower half of the chart giving the years in school abroad of the foreign-born citizens studied contains only two classes that are large enough upon which to base any generalizations: namely, those with eight or more years of schooling, and those with less. The general trend as shown by these two classifications is the opposite of that shown in the upper part of the chart. It appears

[1] The persons interviewed having a graduate or professional education did not follow this general rule. It appears that our experiment was not successful among them. This may have been due to errors in sampling as the numbers concerned are small.

that among the educated foreign-born persons, the more schooling they have had abroad the less likely they are to be interested in American politics. Another way of putting it would be that the foreigners who had gone to school abroad for less than eight years found it easier to acquire an interest in voting in this country than those who had gone to school for eight or more years abroad. Extensive schooling in a foreign country may train one for participation in the political affairs of that country but there is no complete transfer of this training to a new fatherland. Persons educated extensively abroad are likely to read papers and literature in their native language even after coming to this country and consequently may be less interested in the political affairs of this country than those whose foreign education is less extensive. On the other hand, it should be noted that most of those with no schooling at all were born abroad. Schooling in foreign lands, no matter how incomplete, has a decided stimulating effect upon the development of political interests in this country. The foreign-language press prints much material relating to American political conditions. The ability to read in any language helps a person in a metropolitan community like Chicago to establish voting habits. In fact, there is no great difference between the voting response of those cit-

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izens who were educated in this country and that of the citizens who received some education in foreign lands.

It may still be argued that the measures of political education so far discussed are rather inexact. There are many persons who receive their political education by personal contacts and not by reading. The excellent voting record made by some of the illiterate foreign-born males is proof of this fact. Many of the fathers of our country could not read or write, yet they made wise decisions in important political matters. If a man has wide personal contacts and if he discusses political affairs with his neighbors, it is very likely that he will have well-established voting habits. The measure which we adopted for the political interests of the individuals regardless of their formal education is given in the following questionnaire:

1. Who was the father of our country?_____
2. Who is president of the U.S.?_____
3. Where does he live?_____
4. Who was president before him?_____
5. If the president dies in office, who takes his place?_____
6. What does Congress do?_____
7. How many states are there in the U.S.?_____
8. What is the name of our state?_____
9. Who is the chief executive of this state?_____
10. Where does he live?_____
11. Was the Constitution adopted by a vote of the people?_____

12. Does Congress make all the laws in this country?_____
13. Who is your congressman?_____
14. Who are the senators from Illinois_____
15. How are the judges of the Supreme Court of the U.S. chosen?
_____
16. Can a person who commits a crime be arrested in a state other than that in which the crime was committed?_____
17. Can the Constitution be changed?_____
18. Who is the chief executive of this city?_____
19. Who is your alderman?_____
20. What is the only crime the Constitution defines?_____

Those who could read English were sometimes asked to fill out this schedule themselves. Usually this took so long that the interviewer was compelled to resort to the method of direct oral questioning. The number of questions answered correctly were counted so as to give a single score for each individual, which was entered upon the individual's record and punch card. It will be noticed that the first ten questions are very simple. To a native-born American they seem ridiculous. However, it is just such questions as these that are asked by the naturalization officers in examining applicants for American citizenship,[1] and these questions are difficult for some of the foreign-born, especially the foreign-born women whose American citizenship was derived from that of their fathers' or husbands'. The last ten questions are of a more technical na-

[1] Gavit, *op. cit.*, p. 127.

ture but not any more difficult than some that are asked by naturalization examiners.

The results obtained by classifying the data according to the scores obtained on this test are given in Chart XVI.[1]

While the number of those who could not answer any of the questions was rather small, the success of the experiment in this group is marked enough to be significant. Those who answered more than one-half of the questions were much more efficient voters than those who could simply read and write English. As among the other groupings discussed in this chapter, our mail canvass tended to iron out the differences in registration response caused by lack of political knowledge. The persons who could answer nearly all of the government questions correctly did not need to be informed regarding registration dates and voting dates by non-partisan investigators like ourselves, whereas those who had no interest in politics were in some cases flattered by the civic appeal which we made to them.

The principal factors studied in the experiment in the stimulation of voting have now been discussed. It has been shown that a non-partisan, get-out-the-vote canvass has the greatest influence among those least attached to one of the old-line

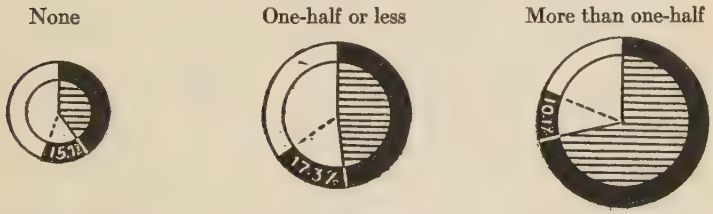
[1] See Appendix, Table XVI.

party organizations, those who have never voted before, among women who are timid regarding elections either because of foreign-language training or because of an inferior status in the home, among the new residents of the city who feel unacquainted

CHART XVI

TOTAL EFFECT OF STIMULATION UPON REGISTRATION RESPONSE OF CITIZENS ATTAINING GIVEN SCORES ON KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT TEST

Proportion of questions answered correctly



None	One-half or less	More than one-half
79 in experimental	576 in experimental	956 in experimental
65 in control group	375 in control group	648 in control group

Proportion in experimental group that registered

Proportion in control group that registered

Proportion not registered

with the political affairs of the community, among the very rich who are hard to reach by the methods employed by the ordinary precinct workers, among the citizens who cannot read and write English, among the citizens who have had no schooling, and among the citizens who have practically no knowledge of American political institutions.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSION

The experiment in the stimulation of voting conducted in selected districts of Chicago in connection with the elections of November, 1924, and February 1925, established very clearly that it is possible to measure the success of an unofficial mail canvass to get out the vote by the method of random sampling. The same technique might be used to measure the influence of other methods of stimulating interest in elections.

On the basis of the experiment, it can be said that if all of the adult citizens in the city had been properly informed regarding the registration dates, 10 per cent more of them would have registered. This shows that registration for voting in Chicago is unduly burdensome upon the voter. Regardless of how long a voter may have resided at the same address, he has to re-register biennially on one of the two dates set aside for that purpose in the month of October. If he changes his residence after the second of these dates and before the next election he has to re-register at the polling place in his new precinct on a supplementary registration day

if he desires to vote in later elections. No opportunity is afforded to register at any other time or place. If, because of failure to avail himself of the provisions of the law for absent registration or because of oversight, he fails to register on one of the dates mentioned, he loses his right to vote. A simple mail canvass will keep the voters posted on these matters. There are many other municipalities in this country to which the experience of the city of Chicago would be applicable. The registration systems in operation in New York and Philadelphia are quite as burdensome upon the voter as the one in Chicago.

If a mail canvass to stimulate registration were conducted on a city-wide basis it would be necessary to have the names of all the eligible voters. The experience of the city of Boston shows that it is possible to obtain a list of all the adult inhabitants of an American city every year. The police in Boston make an annual house-to-house canvass of all the adult persons in the city for the purpose of checking up on the registered voters and for purposes of levying the poll tax. The assessors in Philadelphia and other cities make similar lists for purposes of taxation. These lists could be profitably used for a general mail canvass regarding registration, assuming that the systems of personal registra-

tion now in vogue in those cities were not changed. If unofficial reminders in Chicago could stimulate interest in registration, it is certain that official reminders sent to all the eligible electors before each registration day would increase the proportion of adult citizens that registered. It would not put all the names of the eligible voters on the lists inasmuch as the effect of these notices would vary with the importance of the election. However, our experiment in connection with the Chicago aldermanic election shows that the notices would make intermediate registrations larger than they are at present. In order to secure complete registration of all the eligible voters, radical changes would have to be made in the entire practice of registration for voting in this country. This is a subject beyond the scope of the present report.[1]

Assuming that a much larger proportion of the adult citizens register due to the device of proper notification, it does not follow that all of these new

[1] See J. P. Harris, *Registration Systems in the United States* (University of Chicago doctoral dissertation, 1923), and Chicago Bureau of Public Efficiency, *A Proposed System of Registering Voters and of Canvassing the Registration Lists in Chicago* (March, 1923). In continental European countries there is a system of complete continuous registration. The records in the mayor's office of a French commune form a perpetual census, and the system of police registration in German cities enables the local authorities to keep fairly accurate tab on the entire population. In English cities, the registration officer is obliged by law to make up correct lists of the voters twice a

registrants will be regular voters. The variation in the percentage of the registered votes cast at different elections in Chicago and other American cities is enormous.[1] However, our experiment showed that the simple device of sending the registered voters sample ballots resulted in the casting of a slightly larger proportion of the registered vote even in the presidential election. It is true that the increment was slight and that in some of the districts negative results were obtained, but these can be explained in a satisfactory manner. The proportion of the registered voters who participate in a given election varies with the closeness of the struggle, the dramatic quality of the election, and with the efficiency of the local party organizations. In the presidential election, practically every registered voter who was not deterred by some physical difficulty came out to vote because of the great publicity given to the event and because of the activity

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year. Some American cities have permanent central registration (Milwaukee, Boston, and Portland), but registration is personal and not official, and therefore not complete. For European registration systems see H. Fraser, *The Law of Parliamentary Elections* (London, 1922); G. Kaisenberg, *Die Wahl zum Reichstag* (Berlin, 1924); A. Delcroix, *Recueil des Lois Electorales Belges* (Brussels, 1925); E. Pierre, *Traite de Droit Publique, Electoral et Parlementaire* (Paris, 1924).

[1] See *Report of the Board of Election Commissioners of the City of Chicago*, 1915, and the *Chicago Daily News Almanac* for subsequent years.

of the local party workers. These conditions did not hold for the aldermanic election. Consequently, the local election afforded a better field for experimentation. The appeals to vote sent out in connection with the aldermanic election were just as effective as the appeals to register sent out in connection with the presidential election. In fact, this part of the experiment in the stimulation of voting showed that the proportion of registered citizens who voted could be increased even in wards where there was no election contest. In other words, some persons can be persuaded to go to the polls and vote even though their action cannot have the remotest effect upon the selection of the official personnel of the government. In cases like this voting is clearly a ratifying gesture. Our study has clearly shown that the number of ratifying gestures can be increased by the device of notification. The county judge of Cook County has considered the possibility of sending sample ballots to every registered voter at each election. California, Nebraska, New Jersey, Ohio, Oregon, and Washington already require such notification by law. The publicity pamphlets used in the state of Oregon contain brief *ex parte* statements regarding the candidates and measures to be voted upon. In some European countries, the voters are

notified of the coming elections by the receipt of their electoral cards.

The experiment in the stimulation of voting described in the foregoing pages has brought out some interesting material on the relation between education and popular participation in elections. Knowledge of English, formal schooling, and familiarity with the simplest features of American political institutions are all factors which vary directly with the interest shown in elections. While our notices to register and vote had a more noticeable influence upon the uneducated and the uninformed, the explanation of this result is simple. The educated and those who are well posted upon political matters do not need to be reminded in a direct personal fashion regarding the mechanics of registration and voting. By and large, they can be trusted to find out these things for themselves, if the matters are given reasonable publicity. In other words, persons with some knowledge of politics and government are much more apt to vote than those with little or no knowledge of governmental matters. The adult citizens in Chicago who have little or no schooling are the negroes who have come recently from the South, the foreign-born and foreign-speaking women who had acquired their citizenship through the naturalization of their husbands prior to the Cable

Act, and poor native whites who have failed to make proper social and economic adjustments to the complexity of modern city life. A system of education which reached these groups would do much toward the permanent solution of the problem of non-voting in the city. As the winner of the Grand Rapids get-out-the-vote competition put it: "Train the people of America to govern themselves by establishing in our schools laboratories of self-government and political knowledge."

Certain inferences and conclusions seem to be warranted by the examination of the results obtained in the study of non-voting and in the present study of a non-partisan mail canvass to get out the vote.

First, it is possible by the method of random sampling to measure the success of any device designed to interest people in elections.

Second, a complete personal notification of all the adult citizens regarding the time and place of registration will secure a more complete listing of all persons qualified and anxious to vote than is obtained at present.

Third, a complete notification of all the registered voters regarding the candidates and issues to be voted upon would increase the proportion of registrants who voted in all elections.

Fourth, a civic educational program for adults as well as for children would undoubtedly have an immediate and continuous effect upon the interest shown in elections.

Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the value of education as a method of stimulating voting. The present experiment was partly educational, and the results produced can be traced largely to the confidence which the information imparted to certain persons who had been timid regarding the election process.

APPENDIX A

TABLE FOR CHART II

Three Attempts to Stimulate Registration for Voting in Chicago

Registration Day	Number of Citizens Not Registered Prior to Registration Day		Percentage That Registered on Registration Day	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Oct. 4, 1924.....	2,673	2,986	33.7	42.3
Oct. 14, 1924.....	1,771	1,723	47.4	56.0
Feb. 24, 1925....	894	716	1.1	5.9

TABLE FOR TOTAL USED IN CHART IV

Results by Districts of Experiment to Increase Registered Vote Cast at Presidential Election, 1924

Voting Districts Populated Largely By	Registered Citizens			
	Number		Percentage That Voted	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Wealthy native whites (Gold Coast).	185	196	92.4	95.4
Well-to-do native whites (Hyde Park)	180	187	96.7	92.5
Poor native whites (Near South Side)	91	118	92.3	90.7
Negroes (Douglas).....	50	123	76.0	91.3
Irish (Canartville).....	117	178	94.0	95.0
Germans (Lakeview).....	157	229	96.2	95.2
Swedes (Lakeview).....	171	287	93.0	96.2
Russian Jews (Lawndale).....	164	199	98.2	96.5
Czechs (Lower West Side).....	130	180	88.5	92.2
Poles (South Chicago).....	212	189	93.9	92.1
Poles (Back of the Yards).....	148	192	81.8	95.9
Italians (Near West Side).....	135	151	78.5	89.4
Total.....	1,740	2,229	91.4	92.4

TABLE FOR CHART V

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting

Sex	Number of Citizens Interviewed Aug.–Nov., 1924		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924		Percentage That Voted on Feb. 24, 1925	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Male	1,379	1,547	74.4	83.3	68.6	77.5	35.3	47.3
Female	1,294	1,439	55.2	65.4	49.8	59.9	24.4	33.4
Total	2,673	2,986	65.1	74.6	59.5	68.9	30.0	40.6

TABLE FOR CHART VI

Results by Districts of Experiment to Increase Registration and Voting Response in 1924

Voting Districts Inhabited Largely By	Number Interviewed, Aug. and Sept., 1924		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Wealthy native whites (Gold Coast)	265	242	69.8	81.0	64.5	77.3
Well-to-do native whites (Hyde Park)	285	263	63.2	71.1	61.1	65.8
Poor native whites (Near South Side)	143	165	63.6	71.5	58.7	64.8
Negroes (Douglas)	128	197	39.1	62.4	27.9	50.7
Irish (Canartville)	163	247	71.8	74.4	67.5	70.7
Germans (Lakeview)	240	298	64.5	76.9	62.9	73.2
Swedes (Lakeview)	305	384	56.9	73.7	53.0	70.9
Russian Jews (Lawndale)	233	250	71.1	78.8	69.9	76.0
Czechs (Lower West Side)	173	227	75.2	79.3	66.5	73.1
Poles (South Chicago)	286	243	74.1	77.8	69.5	71.6
Poles (Back of the Yards)	241	275	61.4	69.8	50.2	60.0
Italians (Near West Side)	213	193	63.4	78.2	49.8	69.9

TABLE FOR CHART VII

Results by Districts of Experiment to Increase Registered Vote Cast at Chicago Aldermanic Election, February 24, 1925

Voting Districts Inhabited Largely By	Registered Citizens			
	Number		Percentage That Voted	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Wealthy native whites (Gold Coast)	162	188	36.4	51.6
Well-to-do native whites (Hyde Park)	192	180	28.1	41.2
Poor native whites (Near South Side)	91	101	34.0	33.6
Negroes (Douglas)	46	117	34.8	46.1
Irish (Canartville)	115	177	76.5	84.7
Germans (Lakeview)	149	207	69.0	68.2
Swedes (Lakeview)	162	264	60.4	70.1
Russian Jews (Lawndale)	169	178	50.9	41.0
Czechs (Lower West Side)	122	176	80.2	80.7
Poles (South Chicago)	194	180	39.4	54.5
Poles (Back of the Yards)	140	190	24.3	27.4
Italians (Near West Side)	124	148	43.5	64.2
Total	1,572	2,104	47.5	56.9

TABLE FOR CHART VIII

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Citizens of Specified Party Preferences

Party Preferences	Number Interviewed Giving Party Affiliations		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Democratic	527	610	78.3	81.3	73.6	74.9
Republican	587	764	66.8	75.3	62.0	69.7
La Follette	61	114	57.4	92.1	49.2	88.6

TABLE FOR CHART IX

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Citizens of Specified Voting Experience

Voting Record during 2-Year Period Prior to Nov., 1924	Number Interviewed Giving Previous Voting Record		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Non-voter	726	1,018	34.0	53.2	29.5	46.1
A voter in 1, 2, or 3 elections	364	365	65.4	81.1	57.1	74.5
A voter in 4, 5, or 6 elections	507	506	76.1	85.4	70.8	80.3
A voter in all 7 elections	607	723	87.8	92.1	82.9	87.5

TABLE FOR CHART X

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Different Types of Citizens

Type of Citizenship	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Native-born citizens	1,628	1,809	65.4	74.4	59.8	67.7
Total foreign-born citizens	1,042	1,185	64.6	75.3	59.0	70.5
Individual naturalization in the courts	490	556	75.7	85.4	70.0	80.4
Derivative naturalization:						
Through naturalization of parents	132	152	68.0	75.7	64.4	69.1
By marriage	422	477	50.5	64.5	44.8	59.5

TABLE FOR CHART XI

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Citizens by Country of Birth and Color

Country of Birth	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
United States:						
Whites	1,492	1,566	68.1	76.7	62.8	70.8
Colored	139	246	37.4	60.2	28.8	48.8
Ireland	55	93	67.2	69.0	63.6	65.6
Germany	120	125	67.5	74.4	63.3	72.0
Scandinavian countries	152	199	50.1	73.9	46.7	69.9
England and Canada	39	49	53.8	77.6	48.7	71.5
Czecho-Slovakia	118	117	69.4	79.5	66.9	75.2
Russia	140	157	65.7	75.8	64.3	72.6
Italy	172	135	64.5	79.3	50.0	71.1
Poland	144	182	70.8	75.8	63.9	67.0
Other foreign countries	101	123	69.3	78.0	65.3	74.8

TABLE FOR CHART XII

Results of Registration and Voting Experiment by Terms of Residence of Citizens in Their Respective Districts

Years in the District	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Less than ten years	1,432	1,659	59.1	72.2	54.3	65.3
Ten to nineteen years	429	525	72.3	77.2	66.0	73.0
Twenty to twenty-nine years	342	382	69.6	74.4	61.4	69.4
Thirty years or over	312	342	72.7	80.4	69.2	76.0

TABLE FOR CHART XIII

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Citizens of Specified Economic Status

Rent Paid per Month	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Under $10 per month per person	1,237	1,388	63.7	72.7	56.6	66.0
$10–$100 per month per person	1,245	1,366	65.5	75.3	61.8	69.9
$100 or over per month per person	138	177	74.6	85.3	67.4	81.4

TABLE FOR CHART XIV

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Literate and Illiterate Colored and Foreign-Born

Literacy	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
Citizens who cannot read and write English	310	356	55.5	71.3	47.4	65.7
Citizens who can read and write English	871	1,075	63.5	73.2	58.3	67.2
Total	1,181	1,431	61.4	72.8	55.4	66.8

TABLE FOR CHART XV

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Citizens of Specified Schooling

Schooling	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
No schooling	153	226	52.9	62.8	44.4	58.0
Schooling in the U.S.:						
Less than 8 years	535	534	60.0	71.9	51.5	62.5
Grammar school	532	793	66.9	76.4	62.0	69.9
Secondary school	253	287	69.2	74.5	66.4	68.6
College	121	128	79.3	79.7	74.4	77.4
Graduate or professional school	41	46	95.3	80.5	92.9	80.5
Total	1,819*	2,022†	66.0	74.9	60.4	68.2
Schooling abroad:						
Less than grammar school	334	256	63.0	77.5	57.0	73.8
Grammar school	208	271	59.6	73.8	55.8	70.1
Secondary school	17	28	58.8	64.3	58.8	64.3
College and graduate or professional school	8	5	75.0	80.0	75.0	60.0
Total	703‡	736§	61.8	75.0	57.5	71.5
Grand total	2,675	2,984	65.1	74.6	59.5	69.0

* Includes 337 cases in which schooling was unknown.

† Includes 225 cases in which schooling was unknown.

‡ Includes 136 cases in which schooling was unknown.

§ Includes 176 cases in which schooling was unknown.

TABLE FOR CHART XVI

Total Effect of Stimulation upon Registration and Voting Response of Citizens Attaining Given Scores upon Knowledge of Government Test

Number of Government Questions Answered Correctly	Number of Citizens Interviewed		Percentage That Registered in Oct., 1924		Percentage That Voted on Nov. 4, 1924	
	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group	Control Group	Experimental Group
None	65	79	40.0	55.7	26.2	50.6
One-half or less	375	576	48.0	65.3	42.4	56.6
More than one-half	648	956	71.3	81.4	66.6	76.4

A STUDY OF CITIZENSHIP

SCHEDULE FOR INTERVIEWING ADULT PERSONS

1. Date / /24 Filled by

2. Dist. No. Name

3. **Sex** (1. M.) (2. F.) Ad.

4. **Color** (1. W.) (2. C.) Date of naturalization / /

5. **Cit. status** (1. Birth), (2. Alien), (3. Nat. D.C.), (4. C.C.), (5. S.C.), (6. Ot. Cts.), (7. Mil.), (8. Cable), (9. Mar.), (x. par.), (r. declar.)

6. **Yrs.** a citizen, if naturalized, yrs. in U.S., if alien, and yrs. in Chicago, if native born

7. **Occupation** _____

Employer _____

Bus. Ad.

8. **Country of birth** (10. U.S.), (21. Ir.), (22. Germ.), (23. Norw.), (24. Swed.), (25. Can.), (26. Eng.), (27. Ot. old), (31. Cz.), (32. Rus.), (33. Aus.), (34. It.), (35. Hung.), (36. Pol.), (37. Lith.), (38. Ot. new)

9. Country of birth of father of mother

10. **Place of birth** (1. Urban) (2. Rural)

11. **Age in yrs.**—Date of birth / /

12. **Age on arrival in U.S.** | Date of arrival / /

13. **Yrs.** elapsing between arrival and declar. | Date of declaration / /

14. **Time** elapsing between 21 yrs. (or later arrival) and petit. | Date of petit. / /

15. **Marital** condition (1. Mar.), (2. Mar. f. p.), (3. Mar. f.), (4. Mar. f. A.), (5. Sing.), (6. Wid.), (7. Div.)

16. **Children**—Name of school (00. None), (21. Nat. b.), (31. For. b.), (41. Both)

17. **Sp.** (1. (Eng.), (2. Germ.), (3. Swed.), (4. Ot. Scand.), (5. It.), (6. Ot. Lat.), (7. Pol.), (8. Cz.), (9. Ot. Slav.), (x. Yid.), (r. Ot. for.)

18. **Yrs. in U.S.** | Witness

19. **Yrs. in Ill.** | Address

20. **Yrs. in dist.** | Witness

21. **Pol. contacts** | Address

22. **Reads and writes Eng.** (1. Y.) Paper (2. N.) read

23. **Knowl. of govt.** (1. Insuf.), (2. p.), (3. f.), (4. g.), (5. e.)

24. **Years in school** in U.S. abroad

25. **Voting record** in last seven elections | Regis. | Not. reg. | N.-V. file no.

26. **Economic status**

27. **Reasons for coming to Chicago**

28. **Explanation of citizenship status**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR INTERVIEWING ADULT PERSONS IN CHICAGO[1]

GENERAL PURPOSE OF SURVEY

This survey will be the basis of an experiment to be conducted in the fall on methods of stimulating voting. For this project a complete census of all adult citizens is necessary, therefore this survey must be a complete one, even though it takes considerable time and effort to locate some of the persons living in the district. The names and addresses of most of the adult citizens will be marked on schedules that are taken into a given district. Part of them will be taken from the registration-books, and part of them will be obtained from the schedules made out in the non-voting study of the summer of 1923. However, the interviewer should remember that the names and addresses obtained from these two sources will not give a complete list of all the adult citizens in the district. The non-voting study was not conducted so as to reach all adult citizen non-voters, so the non-voting records together with the lists of registered voters are not complete records of the number of adult citizens in a given district. Consequently, the cards that have the names and addresses on them should only be used as a help and not as the basis of the present survey.

METHOD OF INQUIRY

You will be given certain blocks to canvass. You will be held responsible for obtaining data on every adult person in these blocks. The best time to reach the men is in the late afternoon and early evening and upon Saturday afternoon.

GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE SCHEDULE

Be sure to sign your initials, and fill in the date on which the interview was made in the places provided for the information at

[1] The schedule was also used in a study of naturalization made at the same time. Only the sections of the instructions used in the stimulation of voting study are given here.

the top of each schedule on line No. 1. The blank spaces on the schedule to the left of each of the numbered items are for the code numbers, part of which will be filled out by the field worker and part of which will be filled out by the supervisor of the study. The spaces to the right of the numbered items are to be filled out by the investigator.

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING SCHEDULE

Line No. 1.—(File number to be stamped.) Nothing is to be put in the space at the left of this item by the interviewer. However, the date and the investigator's initials should appear in the spaces at the right.

Line No. 2.—"District Number." The same district number should appear on all the cards that you obtain from a particular district. Enter the surname first, then the given name and middle initial if any.

Line No. 3.—Sex $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1.\ \text{M.} \\ 2.\ \text{F.} \end{array} \right\}$ (one column on punch card). Cross out the proper code. If the person interviewed is a man check the code number (1. M.), which stands for masculine; and if the person is a woman check the code number (2. F.), the symbol which stands for feminine.

Line No. 4.—"Color" (one column). If the person interviewed is white check (1. W.); if the person is colored (negro, mulatto, yellow, or brown) check (2. C.).

Line No. 5.—"Citizenship status" (one column). The complete code for citizenship status is as follows:

(1. Birth): Citizen by birth

(2. Alien): Non-declarant (see r.)

(3. Nat. D.C.): Naturalized in the Federal District Court of Chicago (northern Illinois) located in the Post-Office Building

(4. C.C.): Naturalized in the Circuit Court of Cook County

(5. S.C.): Naturalized in the Superior Court of Cook County

(6. Ot. Cts.): Naturalized in other courts not in Cook County

(7. Mil.): Naturalized under the military provision of the naturalization law

(8. Cable): A woman naturalized according to the provisions of the Cable Act passed September 22, 1922

(9. Mar.): A woman naturalized before September 22, 1922, by marriage

(x. par.): Citizenship attained through naturalization of parents before individual was twenty-one years of age

(r. decl.): Alien who has taken out "first papers," the declaration of intention to becoming naturalized

Line No. 6.—"Years" (two columns). Years naturalized, if a foreign-born citizen; if alien, years in the United States since becoming of age; if native-born, years in Chicago. Put the number of this in the space to the left of the item.

Line No. 7.—"Occupation" (two columns). Simply write in the names of the person's occupation in the line provided for that purpose. The code number for this will be filled in later.

Line No. 8.—"Country of birth" (two columns). Put the name of the exact country on line No. 10. The countries listed contributed at least 2 per cent to the total foreign-born population in Chicago. The complete code for the country of birth of the person interviewed is as follows:

(10. U.S.): United States

(21. Ir.): Ireland

(22. Germ.): Germany

(23. Norw.): Norway

(24. Swed.): Sweden

(25. Can.): Canada

(26. Eng.): England

(27. Ot. old): Other countries furnishing what is called the "old" immigration; this would include Holland, Belgium, Denmark, and other countries of Northern Europe

(31. Cz.): Czecho-Slovakia

(32. Rus.): Russia

(33. Aus.): Austria

(34. It.): Italy

(35. Hung.): Hungary

(36. Pol.): Poland

(37. Lith.): Lithuania

(38. Ot. new): Other countries furnishing what is called the "new" immigration such as Armenia, Greece, Jugo-Slavia, Turkey, and other countries of Southeastern Europe

Line No. 9.—"Country of birth" (two columns). Write in the appropriate code number if father and mother were born in the same country. If parents were born in different countries write in code number for the country of birth of father.

Line No. 10.—"Place of birth (one column). Ask whether the person's place of birth was an urban or a rural community, and cross out the proper term. When some country not included in line No. 8 is given write this in. If born in the United States put down the city or town and state where the person was born.

Line No. 11.—"Age in years" (two columns). Put the age of the person interviewed in the space to the left; also fill in the date of birth.

Lines Nos. 12–17.—(Used in the naturalization study.)

Line No. 18.—"Years in United States" (two columns). The number inserted in the space to the left will be the same as the number for line No. 11 for the native-born. The space to the right of this item is left free for the name of one of the witnesses which the person interviewed used in obtaining his naturalization papers.

Line No. 19.—"Years in Illinois" (two columns). The number of years that the person has been in the state should be written in the space at the left of this item.

Line No. 20.—"Years in district" (two columns). The term "district" means the voting precinct or census-enumeration district.

Line No. 21.—"Political contacts" (two columns). The person interviewed should be asked how he first became interested in politics. If the name of local politician is given this should be placed on the reverse side of the schedule. Any remarks regarding political

contacts should also be recorded on the reverse side of the schedule, such as dealings with governmental officials, the holding of governmental positions, etc. Where possible ascertain whether Republican, Democrat, or Progressive.

Line No. 22.—"Reads and writes English" (one column).

(1. Y.): Means "Yes"
(2. N.): Means "No"

If the person reads some foreign language but is unable to read and write English, the code (2. N.) should be checked. The name of the newspaper commonly read whether printed in English or in some foreign language should be inserted in the space to the right of the item.

Line No. 23.—"Knowledge of government" (one column). Use separate card for this line and for line No. 25. The score should be somewhere in the range of 0–10. Each question counts one-half point.

Line No. 24.—"Years in school in the United States" (two columns). In the space to the right of this item should be put the exact number of years the person spent in school in this country. Do the same for schooling abroad.

Line No. 25.—"Voting record in last seven elections" (one column). List number of elections. On a separate card you will be furnished with a complete list of the dates, candidates, and issues of the last seven elections. If the person interviewed does not remember clearly how many times he voted in the last two years, this information should be brought out by questioning him regarding the specific elections.

If the person's name appears on the printed list of registered voters as of March, 1924, then the symbol "Regis." should be checked; otherwise "Not regis." should be checked. (N.-V. file no.) stands for the file number given to the individual in the non-voting survey conducted last year.

Line No. 26.—"Economic status." Economic status will be measured by rent paid. Do not ask any questions regarding rent if you think that such questions would imperil the main objectives of the survey. Questions regarding rent should be left to the very last. Where a fairly accurate estimate can be made, make no attempt at all to find the exact amount. Put the rent of the apartment to the right and also the number of adults living in the apartment.

Lines Nos. 27–28.—(Used in naturalization study.)

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